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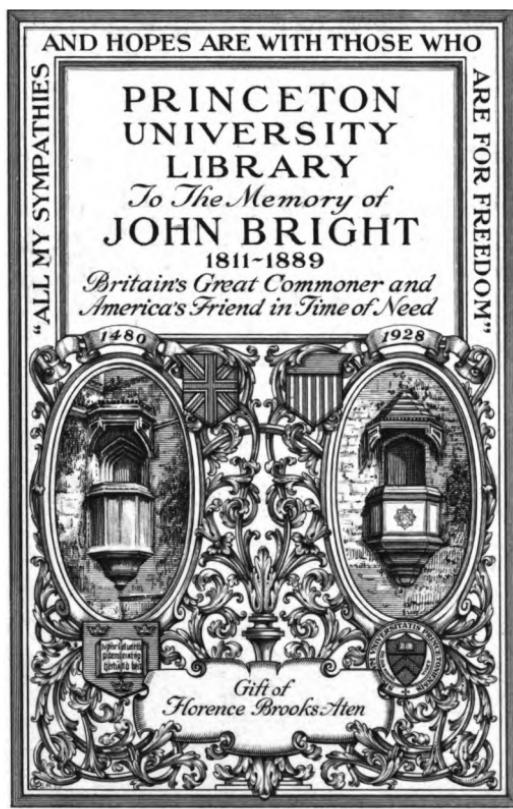


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From the Author

THE
MORAL SYSTEM;
OR,
LAW OF HUMAN NATURE
CONSIDERED AND EXPLAINED
IN A
THEORETIC AND PRACTICAL VIEW.

BY
GEORGE GILES VINCENT.

LONDON:
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Work is, in effect, a Second Edition of the former work, "Of the Government by the Mind," by the Author, but enlarged with corrections, alterations, and the addition of much new matter, presenting an entirely new work on the Moral System.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the introduction to my former work, "Of the Government by the Mind," I have observed that "I confine myself to the consideration of man, and view him in regard to his moral being or nature, as he would consider any other subject, to ascertain any property, truth, or fact concerning that; and proceed upon this consideration of what such power or means applied, or directed to himself, discerns concerning itself, and proceed on plain truths and facts seen. Such truths or facts so seen are like any other truth or fact seen in any other subject. Only in morals it is of truths as to himself, or relating to himself. And such truths or facts in the human government or direction, is the science of morals.

"It is by the means of science all subjects and matters in relation, or which concern them, are better seen and understood, learnt and known, and we can proceed more certainly and correctly in them, and avoid errors and mistakes; and the same benefit may therefore be hoped for in the subject of

morals, or the government and direction of man by his own power, or means, of mind or reason, or the law of the human judgment.

“ The design and great benefit to be achieved by the consideration of any subject, abstractedly or scientifically, is to arrive at certain truths or facts to set out upon or found our proceedings, in regard to that subject so considered ; and have a mode, or certain definite knowledge of it, that following directs us better, or more correctly, as regards that subject ; and I apply this to morals.

“ This is the case with science in general, and a man with knowledge of his subject or matter, will not make the errors or blunders that a man ignorant in them will do, having only a practical acquaintance. This may be familiarly exemplified almost to every one of the least information, in the knowledge or science in the physical nature of man, and of anatomy, pathology, and of the healing arts, of medicine and surgery.

“ And among other means science offers, and by far that of most potency for the better directing men, is to keep the attention to proper or right views in regard to what is found to be true in morals, and exhibited by the science of them ; and to avoid by that means, the mistakes or errors which are apt to arise from practical knowledge alone, and from conceits and prejudices, the result of ignorance ; all which affect the being, or moral man, in his inclinations, and his conduct ; and where in

error, misdirect him as to himself in his object, and mode of proceeding, to its attainment, as bad habits, ignorant prejudices and customs."

The object obtained in pursuing this subject by further enquiry is, that we explain and shew that man has in reason, a fixed, a positive, a certain law, directing him to good.

It will be useful here, for the purpose of directing the attention, and confining it to the subject of the work, to state the principle upon which I proceed and treat the subject as a science.

The principle I proceed upon is, that considering the moral means in man of his mind and in that his distinguishing faculty or characteristic of reason, that is, when examined, found to be a certain, a positive, a fixed law of direction to good. And this is evident and made to appear by enquiring into the nature and subject of reason, and by what we know of it in effect, and that we can only know or understand we mean by it, in any reference made to it, by what is consistent, in regard to any subject or matter it is applied, or made use of, considerately of such, and that morally, as to man, is what is consistent for man, and being so is good. In reason, therefore, man has his direction and authority for his good.

The law or power of reason exists in man, and it is a positive, fixed, or certain law, because it is only known in what is consistent, and therefore, in that, for good. But the power of direction of man to his good by his mind and reason in that, has the

coexisting power or means of direction contrary to good, where opposed to that, or directing contrary to it. And these two modes of direction, in the same power, means, or faculty, whence is derived his law, has confused men. Then, it may be asked, how do we make the distinction?

Seeing that the power in his mind, and reason in that, directing him both to good, and to the contrary, he has supposed the power uncertain, and not a certain means, and as such, not an authority to confide in, or to trust to in his direction, as so viewed it is supposed it may direct either to one or to the other, and is like authority for either.

But in this view people do not make the distinctions, which the enquiry and examination thus made, as here is exhibited, enables to do. Which distinctions are the application of reason to any given or specific subject, and the application of it generally, or as a general agent, or in its executive capacity. Applied to any given subject, reason is that, and is only known as that, which is in conformity with such, agrees with it, is fit, or proper, or beneficial for it. This is good, this is consistent, and by which alone reason is known ; and so applied can only be a law for what is good, and directed by it, that is his direction :—applying it morally, or to man, it is his certain law, therefore, directing him to good.

Reason, as a power or means of general agency, or in its executive power, may direct to good or

to bad. But referring to it on a given subject, and that morally as applicable to man, the subject possessing it, and blessed with its distinctive character, its direction is seen to be a certain fixed or positive law directing that being to his good. What it directs otherwise is not reasonable for the subject, is termed unreasonable as not consistent for the subject, and is immoral, or immorally applied, and is not applied to the consideration of the given subject moral, or man..

It is not making this distinction between reason as applied to a given subject, but viewing it generally, which has confused and perplexed mankind in regard to their reason not being a sufficient director of their actions as directing both to good and to evil. But by seeing this distinction, and applying it only to the given subject, its law or rule is seen to be certain and positive, and its other action is, when it is not so applied, but applied generally, or indifferently, or inconsiderately, of any given subject. We, then, term its direction not in accordance with the given subject, unreasonable, inconsistent, and as to man immoral. Reason directs in either case to the good or bad where a man's act proceeds with his will and knowledge or design; but we use the term unreasonable, and these like terms of contrary meaning, to the act contrary or foreign to the purpose reason is applied in a given subject, as marking that opposed to reason applied to the given subject.

But men claim the distinction of reasonable beings, and claiming that distinction, applying that

power or faculty of reason to ourselves, or morally, we have a certain law in it; and we cannot say, seeing this, and claiming this distinctive characteristic, that we have not a law or direction to us for what is good, or right, or proper, or moral direction for us to proceed upon, or by which we are to act.

Seeing that this power in reason distinguishing man, or the moral being, is a fixed or certain law directing man to good, I refer to this as his authority for good, and as his sanction or justification for whatever is so, and all his actions in conformity as such object or good as practicable; for all or entire good is not practicable, but as far as it is, I refer to this law as his authority for all good, man should have, and man should do, as compassable by man. Beyond this we cannot go, and do not pretend; but as far as we can effect that good, that we are to do, and our authority is in the law of our moral nature in reason directing us. On this law, a truth or fact of the moral nature of man when seen, I build my system.

It is on this law that men of necessity act, unconscious of its authority in its distinctive character and application, but practically only having a knowledge of the subject; and it is not, therefore, regarded as it ought to be, and would be, if seen as a fixed and positive law in which he has authority for good. It is this in fact and effect, namely, the law or authority he has in that directing him, he, unconscious of its reality, refers to as his "rights," and is his "duties:" for both these refer to his

reason as a sanction, or justification, or discriminating means or distinction, of what are his rights, and what are his duties, and for what he is justifiable in, and in things and acts or measures, what are justificatory.

Of the matters connected with and incidental to the subject I necessarily treat, and whether I have considered and discussed all, or those that I have discussed, so as to throw light and perspicuity on the subject, the effect of satisfying the mind of the reader, and the judgment of others must determine. I have introduced what appeared to me necessary, more than that I have abstained from. However the subject in its various ramifications might be considered, and extended beyond what has been given, I have thought more would only lead away from the system which in a work to establish fundamental or original principles is not advisable; and so far I am only apprehensive, what I may have considered necessary may in a degree do this; but the matters in relation to and exemplifying the subject I have treated of, I hope will illustrate the subject, and that I have said no more than what is required for that purpose. At least by the aid of this programme of the principle on which the Moral System is founded, I hope the reader will have his attention kept to his subject, or if lost or digressing from it, by referring to it, he may be brought back and his attention confined to the subject of consideration of the law man has in his moral nature of reason directing him to his good.

The plainness, simplicity, and purity in which the moral subject is thus rendered by science is such that I hope to render it intelligible to all mankind, and through science to render them all in one accord and universal agreement, and greater simplicity, truth, and purity in human actions, by which all men must benefit.

If in what I have said upon this subject I have not well and sufficiently expressed myself, or explained any point or position, or there appears any insufficiency in making out what is stated, or there is any thing stated which appears not applicable, or well grounded, or contradictory, we hope such imperfections will not be regarded by the reader to divert him from the subject, because the system is plain and clear in principle ; that is a proposition self-evident, that reason applied to any given subject is a positive or fixed law or rule for what is in accord with, or good for that subject, or that is consistent and that is only reasonable. And this is a plain and evident proposition in itself, and which cannot be wrong, and that when once seen and stated no one can mistake, but it must be plain and seen by all having the moral means or agency of reason to direct them. And therefore, however inefficiently we have performed our labours of exemplifying and illustrating this subject, and applying it for the practical use and consideration of men, let all these defects be considered, as they must be, of the work, but not of the system ; and which defects are arising from the want of time or

leisure, or the deficient powers of expression, or talent, or ability of the writer ; and let these defects, whatever they are, be placed to the demerits of the author, but not to any defect, fallacy, or error of the system or the law itself, for this needs must be correct, as the self-evident nature of the proposition imports that reason can only be what is consistent ; and, therefore, in what is so, is a certain rule for direction in reason : and let no failing or deficiency, therefore, of this work deter others from their considerations or a regard of the subject, but on any defect, or failing, or insufficient explanation being pointed out, we will endeavour to correct and amend such deficiency, and we will hope in our subsequent labours to give more clearness and perspicuity to the subject for the object the author has in view, of promoting the benefit and happiness of man.

I will only farther observe, that the first and original difficulty in bringing ourselves to the consideration of this subject, is in the confused mass which morals or the subject of human actions present themselves to us in practice. To bring the subject into system, and to trace or shew its law from amidst the chaos, is the task I have undertaken, and to exhibit one law governing and running through all human proceedings, and for simplifying and rendering more plain and easy the attaining a knowledge of ourselves and the foundation of the principle of humanity, upon which we do act as human beings, for the authority and justification of hu-

manity and all human virtues and excellence. There must be some law governing us all, or we could not know humanity or man to be man.

This law, which stamps every thing human, I have endeavoured to shew for the purpose that by seeing it men may more certainly and correctly attain its object in their own good, the human good; and that seeing how it works and acts in every thing human of good, our attention may be more called to it, and it may be more regarded for the control of us.

I hope to elucidate the Moral System built on facts of the moral powers or nature of man, that will be apparent, and that none shall remain ignorant of its truth for their right direction, when they study and consider the subject, but shall recognise and acknowledge it, and which shall be past denial or contradiction by reasonable beings.

I will take this opportunity of referring to certain terms I have made use of in my different writings, such as moral means or moral nature—moral approbation—the human judgment—the government of the mind. All these terms mean or refer to the same source or power of human direction by the “mind,” and the great and distinguishing characteristic in that of “reason,” and it will therefore be understood that all these terms refer to or mean the same thing or subject. And whether we call the power or direction of man by his mind, the moral nature, the moral approbation, the human judgment, or the government of the mind, or the law

of direction of man in reason, they mean and are the same thing,—the mind of man and reason as the great distinction in that, and as the means or power of the human direction.

I am most fully impressed with the importance of the work I have attempted, of a system of the moral nature, its law and rules of action, as the distinguishing character of man or human nature. My reflections have led me to the subject, and I can only say I have given it my best endeavours, and certainly the most laborious exertions in the moments I could snatch from the hours of privacy, after the business of the day was over. Yet in human weakness I must seek for allowance to be made for the many imperfections that may be found, but yet hoping to have succeeded in offering a work that may be useful and beneficial.

I will crave further attention of the reader in making one more observation in this introduction, that is, to notice the difficulty to reconcile that first and great institution of practical good, of "property," and the main and chief means of the accomplishment of good with that object, and to shew that such institution is in conformity with the law of his direction. For this I have devoted a considerable portion of my work and as the concluding part of it. I have treated the subject separately as that on which the chief or main good depends, we may say, that subject on which the good of man, as the good of society, wholly and entirely morally rests or depends. I have considered it abstractedly

and practically, and I trust and hope have vindicated this great moral edifice of man of the institution of "property" for good, shewing and maintaining the claim of all society on it for good, under the power and authority of governments and the regulation of laws.

ERRATA.

Page 6, line 26, for "good, that commonly speaking in morals, or as concerning man, his actions and relations. We say," read "good. That commonly speaking in morals, or as concerning man, his actions and relations, we say,"

12, line 16, for "assent" read "assert".

35, line 1, for "or better," read "as better".

45, line 28, after "likewise did the same," add "could be of itself the authority of man".

76, line 14, after "in its proper place," delete the following words, "in the practical consideration of this law and".

THE MORAL SYSTEM.

PART I.

THE PURPOSE OF THE WORK STATED, AND PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

The science of Morals the subject of the work ; general definition.

THE science of Morals is the knowledge of the moral power by which we designate the mind, its various powers, and that of reason in particular, and the law or course of action in the direction of man, as the being possessing such power ; and distinguishing him and his actions from all other creatures or beings.

Habitual modes of acting have not allowed men to see the positive or fixed law of their moral nature.

Mankind so practically or habitually—we might say so mechanically—pursue their course in life, that it appears never yet to have occurred to them, or do they see, that their actions proceed upon a general fixed or positive law of their nature directing them, which is constantly acting on them, and impelling them to one object, namely, good, however such direction may be interrupted and opposed occasionally, and even perverted ; and this by other causes existing in their own nature relative to the object of the general law directing them.

The common mistake made in considering moral subjects.

The mistake men make in considering moral subjects, appears to me to arise from their not making a proper distinction between that which is good, and the authority for it morally; but mixing their authority for good, and their actions and things that are so, and confounding one for the other.

Truth, honesty, industry, charity, and generally all precepts of virtue as good; life, health, liberty, and property as good; have been considered as being authority to men for such good in them. But morally it is our reason as the means directing us, that as these subjects are of use, serviceable, fit, and beneficial to man, and therefore reasonable, as a reasonable being directed by the moral means, he considers them right or proper, and adopts or approves them, being consistent or reasonable, directed as a reasonable being by his reason.

It is evident that it is not the good in these things themselves that are their authority. If man had no mind to judge of these things, and no reason to direct, perceiving their agreement or consistency for man, he would not consider or know because they were right or proper, and good and consistent, therefore, and reasonable, he should adopt them; but might do so accidentally, or indifferently, like animals without mind or reason, or judgment directed by reason.

He could not without reason be conscious, because they were good, and his reason acting or directing

by what is consistent or proper, and directing him as a reasonable being, and obedient accordingly to that power, he should adopt them. He would no more see or know he should speak truth, be honest, be just, be charitable, industrious, or should value life, respect property, or have liberty, than a brute creature without mind, as an ox, a horse, a dog, or cat, or even the sagacious elephant would know, because good was right or proper, or fit, useful or beneficial, they should respect it, or should do good.

The good, morally considered, is simply as a quality in a thing, that, which reason directing man, seeing it is right, proper or consistent, or wholesomely agreeable, should be, or is what he should adopt, approve, or do, as rested with, or depended on him, man.

The authority, then, morally, is in the reason judging what is consistent, what is right, proper, beneficial, or good, directs the being according to reason by that which is so, is consistent, agreeable, right, or proper, and good ; and to adopt and approve, and do that.

But the connexion or relation there is in that means directing man of his mind and reason, and his actions, and the things and matters he is to judge of, as concern or affect him is such, that it is not a matter of surprise he should mix and confuse the two together ; in experiencing practically, and perceiving morally or reflectionately, the excellence of virtuous precepts, and the benefit of those things and matters essential for the good, nay, for the ex-

istence of man, and promoting the good and happiness of man, in life, health, liberty, and property. It is not, I say, a matter of surprise, and the subject matter being the more immediate object of his attention than the consideration and the study of his moral power, and the mode or law of its action, that he should place the authority to be in the good, and not see it in the source of his direction; but from which, in truth, all authority, and justification morally, does arise, exist, and flow: but, on the contrary, suppose that the good is adopted and approved of by man on the authority of that good alone, without reference to his mind or his judgment, and his reason directing him in that.

It is evident that men do make this mistake, because they do apply the terms by which they designate such authority or sanction to that in which the good consists, as "rights," to the things that are good, as life, liberty, and property; and as to actions good, in what they should do, calling such actions, as truth, honesty, mercy, charity, and the like "duties." Which terms "duties" and "rights," are the authority, but arise or exist in his power or means of his direction, in his reason sanctioning or justifying a reasonable being only in what is consistent and reasonable; and as such, in what is fit, proper, beneficial, or good.

This mistake, or mixing and confusing the two things, the authority and good; or the sanction or approbation for the things and acts sanctioned or approved morally, it may be supposed would not be

of much consequence ; since practically, or in experience, men do see and discriminate what is good, and guided in consideration by reason, prefer good to evil, and virtue to vice. Yet, not seeing the difference between authority and good, they have been, and are occasionally, much perplexed in their judgments ; and reason, the power directing them morally, being much confused, and perplexed in its use and application to the subjects considered, it cannot see and judge so perspicuously as it might, were it seen as the real and true authority, not confused with its object, but acted by rule or system, applicable to its object. And what is most of consequence is, that the power which does direct man morally, and is directing him in every thing characterized as human, not being seen to be, as it is, the authority directing man, sanctioning and justifying him in all that is moral and human, and good, it has not that weight with him which it should have ; nor does he respect it as he should, and would do, did he see its true pre-eminence, not only as the distinction which it is, but as the authority which it also is of man, different from, and above, all other created things and beings known to him ; and he in consequence did submit himself more to its law or rule. The failing, moreover, will be from not seeing the authority, but looking more to the authority in the act or thing good ; that good which is not always pleasing or so welcome, however right, proper, or beneficial for man, when it stands in the way of his own views, pleasures, desires, interests,

will or caprice, or operates to his prejudice where he is to regard others, he will be more prone to disrespect or lay aside the authority only seen in, or supposed to be in, the act or subject itself; and will feel more at liberty to disregard an authority only supposed to be in a measure, an act, or matter, which he has power to treat and deal with at his will or pleasure, than if he saw his internal monitor of reason was his authority; and consequently would then see his authority is not at his will to deal with, further than to obey it, if he would act consistently, for that such authority is a positive and fixed law, he cannot refuse, deny, or set aside its truth, in directing him by what is consistent, right, or proper, or beneficial, and good; and that, contrary to it, is that which he cannot have sanction or justification in, and that as man, claiming or standing upon his distinction, and characteristic, and pre-eminence of a moral being, he must submit to for justifying and maintaining his character, and consideration in that, as a man or human being, by that means which alone distinguishes him as such in reason, and is his title to consideration morally as such.

I will further observe, that men have made no distinction, or properly so, between authority and good, that commonly speaking in morals, or as concerning man, his actions and relations. We say, that good is our authority, or the sanction we have, in any thing or act that is good, and the ground or reason for our regard of, or adopting it, or doing the act good: Life is good, and property is good,

therefore we should regard these, and should not kill or slay any man, hurt or do him injury, but should act with peace and good will ; neither should we take or damage the property of another, but should be honest, faithful, and just ; and so of other things and acts that are good, we should regard them and do them as good. But men, so speaking, never seem to consider that good, being the occasion or cause why they should regard what is so, and do what is so, depends on their own acts ; that it is to another source or cause morally, that they approve or adopt the matter that is good, and do the act which is so ; and that that which is good is adopted for that cause morally, by a power or means directing man, the being so acting, to that which is good.

This power, the mind, and in it the judgment and reason as the means directing him, and the authority, therefore, morally, of that which is good, and that, discriminating by his judgment a matter or an act to be good for that considered, reason directs him by what is fit, proper, or good, is reasonable, and directs a reasonable being to that which is so and is good.

In using the term or expression, that good is the reason or cause of our adopting that which is so ; reason as here referred to is of the good morally considered, where it accords or agrees with a subject, as expressive of what is fit, proper, or benefit, and the authority is in the mind and reason in that, judging or discriminating this fitness or this accord-

ance with reason, or the reasonableness of that good, and therefore in reason directs us in the adoption of it. But if the term reason, as cause of acting, is applied, or used as the motive or authority of adopting the good, without reference to the moral consideration of it; as in the case of a dogmatical or arbitrary view or esteem of any thing, or act so called, or on a superstitious idea of good, as human sacrifice, self-torture, immolation of person, or cutting off fingers, beating out teeth, or any absurd custom or observance, useless and injurious, without any real object of service or moral benefit to be obtained in such; here we see the authority to be assigned to good, and the term reason very inappropriately made use of in such cases.

The moral law a positive means of directing us to good. That the authority for good, morally, is in the power or means man has for his direction in his mind and reason in that; I am prepared to show, that the mind, as this moral power or means in man, directing him, and by reason in that power, cannot do otherwise than direct him to what is good, or fit, or proper, or beneficial; and is, therefore, a fixed and positive law of that moral nature, or means in man, of mind, that can and does only direct him to good.

It is true, he does not always adopt or do what is good; but yet he is directed to it by this law of his moral nature in reason; and that he does not always adopt it, or do good, is from other causes operating, acting and influencing the man, which oppose, prevent, and pervert the direction of this

moral law of his nature. It is, nevertheless, the law and means of his direction to good, because reason can only reasonably direct and act by what is consistent, and is good ; and he knows this, or is conscious of his reason, and what is reasonable and accords with the truth of this direction, (although it appears to have escaped his observation as a positive and fixed law of his moral nature,) when he acts wilfully contrary to it, knowing and seeing that it is wrong, unfit, improper, bad, and not good.

But this law being the direction and authority of reasonable man, in accordance with his moral nature, he is required by it to do good, or what is so in accordance, and reasonable, as a reasonable being, and to be entitled to claim the consideration and respect of a reasonable being, or he forfeits his claim to the benefit of that character.

On investigation it is seen that all terms of authority morally do refer to the law directing us of reason.

But it is proper in this preliminary portion of my work, before I leave this point noticed, of the authority morally for good to be in reason, to make some further observations to shew this by the fact, that in referring to the terms we use to express authority, that reason is finally referred to as such, which we shall find by inquiry, although it appears never adverted to as such authority for good, which has been considered to be its own authority, and that our reason is rather considered as a secondary means aiding or assisting man to adopt the good, or do good, for such supposed authority in that.

The terms we use to express the acts of the mind in its judgment, estimation, or decision, in the subject moral or concerning man, such as our own approbation, and our rights, and our duties, all which are used to denote our authority, sanction, or justification, are used to denote the authority supposed to be existing in the good itself; as the approbation of good, it is said, is the sanction or authority there is in good itself; and is our authority for approving it. Of rights, it is said, the good being in itself its authority, good is the authority of our rights, as in life, or liberty, or property, these are held to be the authority for themselves in their good, when it is said these are our rights, as life, our liberty, or our property are said to be our rights. Duties also are considered to be in the authority of the good itself, when it is said, as commonly expressed, that such acts that are good, that is our authority for them, as in the expression that truth, honesty, or charity, are our duties.

But we shall see when we inquire what these terms are, or mean, and bear reference to, that they all as authority refer to reason, as resting on or according with reason, and that they arise, depend on, and exist but upon that law or authority acting in the moral nature of man of his mind,

Approbation,
what, and
shewn to be
based on the
law directing
man of rea-

The approbation is a term by which we express what we think well of, or judge favourably of, or commend, or mark our assent to as agreeable or consonant to reason, as what is fit, pro-

son and his authority for that.

per, or in accordance with, or of use, service, or benefit to the matter or subject considered, and is good as to such subject considered: and in this approbation, the subject considered being reasonable, is our authority for what is good.

Our approbation is marked or known (we are speaking morally and of man, as a reasonable being is directed by his reason) by what accords with reason, and is fit, proper for, or agrees with, is of use, or service, or benefit to the subject considered, and what is so is good, in relation to which we approve any thing, or which has our approbation, and is therefore reasonable; and being so, our approbation is our authority as a reasonable being, and directed by reason; and the authority we have in our approbation is in its accordance with reason. And this, as to the subject moral or man, is the good of man, or human good, and what we denominate as good in the simple and common use of that word. Moreover, we cannot, and do not approve what is bad or wrong, or is not fit, or is prejudicial in any thing in relation to the subject considered, or is unreasonable. This we disapprove, and we have no authority in what we disapprove.

It is evident, therefore, that the mind, by its act in its judgment approving, by what is reasonable, and not approving what is not so, or is the contrary, and his approbation in his approving being his authority for that approved, and having no authority in what he does not approve, that the mind so act-

ing is directed by this law, and to what is good, and not to the contrary, in which he has no authority ; and shews the law he has in his reason directs him in his approbation, to good ; and what this is or means, is seen or known by what is fit, proper, or of benefit.

If it is necessary to say more on this, we may satisfy ourselves of the fact in a more familiar use of the term approbation, and ask what do we mean by it ; and if we mean by it any thing but that which is reasonable, and that we do not mean what is unreasonable, for what is so, that we cannot and do not approve, and has not our approbation ? Our approbation, therefore, is decided by our reason.

Rights, what,
and shewn
to be based
on reason.

Rights are a term by which we express claim, or assent, maintain, and support that which we consider is good,

and morally in the sense we are speaking, the human good. These also are known or marked by what is claimed being reasonable, or fit, or proper in agreement with, of use, benefit, or service, and is good for the subject in reference to which it is applied, and morally of man, and this being reasonable, rights are our authority for such good. We have no rights to, or authority for, what is bad, wrong, hurtful, or injurious to man, that is not reasonable ; and therefore we see in our rights, as we do in our approbation, we are directed by this law in that we claim by what is in accordance with reason, and that rights refer to this law, of necessity, in what is claimed by them to be accordant with it,

or they do not exist ; and we have no rights, nor any authority for what is unreasonable.

It is evident, therefore, that the mind is, in our rights or claim, directed by this law in what is claimed being requisite to be accordant with reason, and to what is not so, rights do not exist ; and our reason is shewn also by our rights to be the law directing man, in them, to good, and his authority in them, is in their accordance with reason.

Duties shewn to be based, as probation and rights are, on the law directing us of reason. Duties are the term we use to denote obligation, or that we consider we ought to do or observe as certain acts or things that are good, or are effective of or requisite for good, and generally what should be done, or observed, or regarded by man. Which things or acts being good or reasonable, our duties are our authority to do or perform them, and our obligation in such respect.

Duties are likewise only known or understood by what is to be done or observed being reasonable, and morally good, and this morally to man, or effective of his good, will preserve or maintain it, or prevent or oppose that detrimental to it, or that shall be hurtful to man. We have no duty or authority to do what is unreasonable, or contrary to reason, or what is not fit, or is improper, and is prejudicial to the subject for the consideration of which our reason is applied, and morally, to man. Therefore, we see that the mind is directed by this law in our duties or obligation to act, by what we esteem or consider we should do, and has our au-

thority, being accordant with reason ; and what is not in accordance with reason, we have no duty to do or regard that.

It is evident, therefore, in our duties, as it is in our approbation and our rights, that the mind is directed by this law, and which is our authority for that which accords with it, which, being reasonable, is morally good : and in what is otherwise we have no duties. And this law is again shewn by our duties to be the authority in reason directing man to good.

I will further observe on duties, that they necessarily follow, in course of order, our rights ; which being our claim by this law to good, what rests with or depends on men, or may be within their power or means, they should do or observe for the fulfilment or accomplishment of it. If men have rights to their good, it is a necessary consequence that men should do good, or it cannot be accomplished in what it may rest or depend on men to effect, or through their agency to perform. What may be dependent on man, or is to be accomplished by human agency, must be done by man, and our duties are our obligation in the authority of this law directing man to do what will be requisite for good resting or depending on us ; and this morally, or as regarding man, and his rights to good, is to have consideration and respect of man in what is his good, and is accomplishable as resting with, or dependent on man, or within his power or means.

These terms, approbation, rights, and duties, are

but expressive of the different acts of the mind or judgment directed by this law to its object, as the assent or agreement to good, the claim to it, and the obligation to do what is so.

We may exemplify these terms by saying we approve of wholesome food, air, and freedom of action or liberty; such are good and reasonable. We have a right to our life, our freedom or liberty; such is good and reasonable: and it is our duty that we should do what is required for life and liberty; and such is good and reasonable. So that we see these terms are only descriptive or significant of different actions of the mind in reason, by its judgment or estimation, as that we assent to, claim, and should do.

Such are a course or mode of action in the mind directed by this law operating in and characterizing all men, both as individuals and man generally, in what is moral or accordant with reason in relation to, or as considerate of man; and shewing this law of the direction to good possessed by man universally in his moral means or nature of mind.

Approbation, rights and duties, modes of the mind's action. We mention these subjects as the several ways or modes of the mind's action in the direction man has, and action. by a law positive and fixed directing him to good, to shew it, and which terms we shall have incidentally to refer to in the course of this work upon this law; and likewise, that by such definitions and explanations concerning these modes of the action of the human mind, we may readily

know what we mean when we make use of them, or in any reference to these terms in the course of our work.

I pause, almost, in making so plain a statement, to ask, is there any occasion to propose to our attention so plain matters of fact as those we have just adverted to, and what we shall have to state as to this law? But it does not appear that it has occurred, or that it does occur, to men in the consideration of the subject of their moral direction, that direction to be a positive and fixed law, and consequently they do not obtain so clear and correct views of their authority and moral relations generally, as requisite for better understanding the subject and the direction of their actions in accordance with it.

The object of the work that of shewing the law of the moral nature, and the object in that of good.

The effort has been to point out and establish the law of the moral nature of man; and seeing that there must be some general direction in man to render all he does in character human, and that we may, by better knowing this law, better accomplish or effect its purpose. That purpose already stated of good, and morally speaking, the human good.

If I have been successful in the pointing out, and have shewed the law of the moral nature in man, most thankful I am, in the hope that it may be in any way instrumental in rendering any useful service to my fellow creatures; and make my most grateful, but humble acknowledgment to a most Benign Providence that life has been spared to me, and that

my health and strength have not failed, until I have accomplished this undertaking.

Reference to former work, in what it may be deficient. I have, in the preceding work, "Of the Government of the Mind," referred to that power directing man, and have observed the direction of it to man to good in reason, and as a reasonable being governed by the power of his mind. The want of more explanatory observations in the statements may be wanting in that work. I hope to have supplied that want in the present instance, and as an inducement for attention, have endeavoured not to exceed what may be requisite to impart the necessary information upon the subject. But it is for the benefit, I hope, of the reader, to trespass on his patience, and that I entreat his attention.

Qualification of the sense referred to in the term "good." The direction to what is good is to be understood in a practicable sense, not in an ideal or imaginary one, of all good or benefit, without detraction, or alloy, or admixture of some ills or evil. Likewise, in a consideration of mankind generally, and not individually; but of what shall be good in the necessary relations and connexions, in which the good or benefit of man is found to be involved one with another, or in the relations of society.

There must be some cause of direction to this object good; this is the moral law. Let us reflect as considerate beings. There must be some cause or means of this discernment, this direction, or preference of good. In what is it then? I do not hesitate to say that it is in the

moral power or means itself, which will be plain to all when we consider the nature of the moral power or means in its direction.

Position further explained. It is true, the mind is cognizant of good and evil alike ; it has reason, and though it may have failings, and weakness, and be susceptible of influence from various affections ; it has, in reason, a course of action or law marked, and in it a distinct character and means of direction. Viewing, then, this distinctive characteristic of man in reason, we see the pre-eminence of the greatest quality practically influencing him in all that is good ; and we only wish to show him this law or power distinctly, and separate from the other influencing or distracting causes in the way of its more correct operation in the man. Its law of direction is clear and evident ; this never fails, never while the power is sane and healthful. Its weakness of discernment may fail, and the inclinations of a contrary tendency may withdraw him from its propriety, or attach him to another direction opposed to it ; but yet it acts and points out what should be the direction, moral or consonant to itself, and its distinction, by which it characterises the man.

Thus his reason applied in his ignorance, or want of science to see its law or rule to man ; his weakness, his desires, passions and inclinations, because existing in the same being and knowledge of his mind, which acting in all these occasions, alike helping him to see the good, as to execute what is

evil ; he has never asked what does the reason direct considerate of its subject to which it is applied, separated from other causes, matters or things affecting it. Applied to any subject, and applying it morally, or considerate of man, what does it direct consistent with that to which it is applied consider-

The law is in truth uniform, and never deviating in its direction. ately ? We see its law is uniform and fixed. By what is consistent do we only know it, and consistent with the subject to which it is applied considerately, its law is fixed and positive, and never deviating.

Further observations in proof. But men, nevertheless, viewing this power of direction of the mind, affected by all the weaknesses and failings, desires, passions and inclinations affecting man, have always, under its influence, operating and directing him, sought to point out the rules of good and benefit to man ; and have urged their better claim and adoption by man, and set forth the contrary of vice and evil, and the disadvantages attending these. Thus is evinced, in the unconscious working of this law, its never-failing direction in its consistency.

The labours of man on these occasions are co-existent with his being, and refined, improved, elucidated more plainly and strongly with the advancement of knowledge and refinement in consequence, through all the stages of time in which men have existed. But the want of science, nevertheless, has always been felt ; and the works of men, hitherto a failure in so far as the law of the direction to

good, in their reason, viewed separate and distinct of itself, has been the want and defect of all.

The fact of the authority capable of being plainly stated. This authority presents itself in the most plain simplicity, by inquiring into the nature of the mind's action in its direction, and seeing that by the moral means or power, in reason, that only can be accorded to or is reasonable which is consistent, and that is good morally; he has in that direction his authority for good. Then, as a reasonable being, he can only feel himself justified and justifiable in what is reasonable or consistent, and that in the moral subject, or man, is his direction by reason to his good, and his authority as a moral or reasonable being.

But men do not appear to notice, that their direction to such good is sanctioned or agreeable to a law of their moral nature, fixed and positive as any known rule or law of nature, or any fact or truth; and that it is apparent in truth and fact when we inquire into, and examine into the moral means of man, and the law he has in it for his direction.

What the moral good generally really means, and explained why it is as stated.

It may be said that this good of man, his personal good, his interests, health, and in worldly matters concerning him and his welfare in this respect, is not the moral good alluded to by men. But

I would, on the contrary, ask, what other good is it men refer to in this world, or on this earth, or moral good means? The good, as to man, can only be what is the benefit of man. This good, we

all know, cannot be had or enjoyed invariably, or without some alloy, some detraction, some sufferings, restraints, endurances, losses, and pains, miseries perhaps ; and these suffered where they ought, as what we term duty requires, for the consideration of others, is called virtue, and the good really means. But is that the only good meant ? Is only suffering and enduring meant ? Surely this is a mistake, or perversion of the meaning. Why is such suffering or enduring considered good ? Not on account, assuredly, of the evil the sufferer or patient endures, but for that which is good to others, the necessity of the consideration of whom, imposes restraints, and rather endurances, than injure others.

Duties impose this. This suffering is also limited, or has its bounds or rules. But the good is the object or occasion for such suffering, and the evil is surely not the good ; and the virtue, or good in that, of observing duty, and bearing restraint, and endurance, is for the good accounted due to others.

It is true, we find people devoted only to misery and endurance under that persuasion of mind that suffering is good, to do good to others, and is the virtue and excellence of man ; accounting the merit only in suffering. Again, others carried still further this, the doctrine of suffering, and that to suffer is the merit of man to make his atonement or his propitiation ; and so far lost to any other view than that, they suffer for no other purpose but suffering, and would persuade others to do as they themselves do. Now I aver that this is evil, and a mis-

take in the man—a perversion of his faculties, and of the brightest glory his God has given and invested man with of his reason. Which alone can exalt man, and by exalting him, the creature, exalt the Being who created him, and so endowing him ; and by the modes and conduct most practicable according with that power, and his pre-eminence of distinction by it.

The good we seek and mean, is that which is the benefit of man ; but this cannot be had without alloy. The measure of that is what we are to learn and to bear ; that good in reason we are to have, as designed. The good, then, we mean, is limited good, as practicable. That contended for by others, of suffering, is mistaken for that which necessarily must be alloyed ; by imagining it, only in the alloy they seek good, and judging of it only by the alloy, and not for the intrinsic good, which is our object ; of which the alloy is only the corruption or deterioration, but unavoidable ; and we must bear with, and must content ourselves to bear what alloy cannot be avoided. They would take the alloy, and discard the real object altogether.

The idea of
moral good
here taken, in
conformity
with Scrip-
ture.

The Scriptures do not require this. They call on man to be just, to be neighbourly, to love his brother in the enlarged sense of the human race ; to be honest, and render unto others that which is their due ; and above all, to be charitable, to be forgiving and merciful ; to bear with, and be patient under the ills and sorrows of life. But to

do good, and eschew evil expressly, therefore, not despising good, not deprecating it; but making it the object of human life and action, toil and exertion, to accomplish, subject as it is, and must be rendered and enjoyed under those ills or evils, alloys or detraction by which existence is compassed, and are unavoidable with the regard of our duties.

My purpose, therefore, is to consider this means or power man has to direct him, the moral means, that of his mind, and by inquiring into this means, to ascertain the laws of its action for his greater certainty in following or observing them, and attaining the object of their direction. In fact, to study the nature of man in his moral means, which distinguish him in his direction regarding man, the same as we would inquire into and study any other subject, and to ascertain truths and facts of his moral nature and means of direction.

Study of the moral science as any other subject necessary. This is studying the subject moral, or man in his distinction of his moral nature, as we would study any other subject with regard to the nature of that, and to attain the facts or truths as to them; and the knowledge acquired of the truths and facts of the laws of the direction of his moral nature is the science of that.

Our business, therefore, will be to make the inquiry into this means of our direction; to show and explain the nature of this law or means, how it acts, its purpose or object in good, the various causes affecting it, and the many circumstances that may

be necessary to bring under our attention in regard to it ; the better to see and understand, and have a correct knowledge in the subject. This is the science of morals, or of this moral nature in us, and we shall first refer to that most of importance in it, of " Rights," and wherein the mistake and consequent confusion as to the authority, and the subject of that authority in good, is most conspicuous and perplexing, and to point out the error and the mischief, in consequence, that does result for want of science to place the subject in its true light, and show the facts and truths respecting the law of our direction for our better knowledge and obedience to it, and for instruction and information to all.

RIGHTS CONSIDERED.

IN proceeding in this work, before I enter more fully upon the consideration of this law, I propose considering rights, to show the importance of that so considered as rights in man, for the promotion and maintenance of all human good. And I shall do this the more to justify the present undertaking, and shewing that men, for want of science, have confused, or not sufficiently considered the distinction between their authority morally and the good, and to shew, and so far canvass the very crude and im-

perfect, and inefficient notions apparently at present existing on the subject of rights, for want, as I think it may be fairly assumed, of seeing correctly this law, which men possess in their moral means or powers of their mind, and the necessity, therefore, of giving them more true and correct knowledge to prevent their errors and mistakes, and to give them a right train of thought in the consideration of man, the subject moral, generally.

The law shewn must direct men, though it were not admitted.

I will make one further observation on this law directing man ; that did not men recognise their approbation, or their rights, or their duties, or were to question or deny them, nevertheless

man has his direction and authority, his sanction and his justification in this law to good ; for, as a reasonable being, man can judge, or estimate and know only that as reasonable which is fit or proper, right, in agreement with, of use, service, beneficial or healthful for the subject considered ; and such is good. He can, therefore, have no other direction as a reasonable being, directed by his reason, but what this directs, and is in consonance with it, and can have no authority, sanction, or justification in what is contrary to it, in regard to the subject considered, for such is unreasonable ; and therefore man directed accordant to reason, or reasonable man, can only be directed by that, and have authority so directed in what is reasonable, in what is good, and this morally, or as regards the subject moral, or man, is the human good.

Capability of
the law of the
moral nature
being ex-
plained to all.

Similar terms, or expressions of the same significance to these I have used to exemplify this law, are probably in use in all languages, applying, as the terms do, to what must be of common reference with all mankind, as their approbation in what they assent to, or judge well of; their rights in what they claim, or hold they have title to; and their duties, in what is held to be incumbent on them as men, and they should do as men towards, and in regard of one another; and the same means or opportunity, therefore, we may hope can be afforded all people in these common terms, in common use, to exemplify this law of their direction, and their authority in it for the good of mankind.

The authority adverted to, as, good, that man has his authority, his and shewn to be, the rights sanction, or justification for what is so, of man founded on and which good he claims or asserts on the moral such authority, he expresses by the law. term of "rights."

The rights of man, or what we allude to as the authority or justification man derives from himself, through his moral powers or means, are, I consider, clearly shewn by what has been stated, to be the authority he has in this law, in his moral means, for his direction. And when men speak of rights, as such as they have as men, they in truth mean nothing else than the authority they have through their moral means, their comprehension and judgment, as to that which concerns them, as their lives,

their persons, their liberty, and the like concerning man, and what they should receive at the hands of men, as respect, consideration, and justice.

As a reasonable being he has no other, and can have no other or higher authority, than what he has in the law or rule of his direction, and is this distinguishing power or means which is his pre-eminence over other creatures and things, as he can know and see; and all men have the same, and therefore it is the rule and authority of all for their good, and the same right in one as another, and the same authority. And without this law or authority we cannot see or know of any other as man, or within his cognizance as a reasonable being.

Importance
of the au-
thority gene-
rally adver-
ted to.

So that the seeing of this moral nature, and knowledge of this law and authority in it, is of the first importance that he may understand and know that, directed by it, his rights are his claim and his authority to be regarded in his good, and which wholly rests or depends on his moral nature, and see the great necessity there is for studying and considering the subject, to see and learn, and understand his law and authority in it.

And we will here observe, that in the inquiry into, and study of the law of the moral nature of man, speaking of, or referring to "rights" as human claim for regard, or consideration, it cannot be too often repeated, nor too well borne in mind, that rights arise and exist in the law and the authority in that law which man has for the direction to good

in his reasoning powers, or the distinguishing characteristic of him in the faculty of his mind.

Men have always practically acted on the law, though not sensible of it, so as to be able to explain it or see it.

Men have acted, and do act out of a regard for good directed by this law, practically sensible of it, in experiencing the advantages of good, without remarking this law they have directing them to good. It is undeniable, that men have acted practically on the knowledge they have of good, but practically they do not see their authority morally to be otherwise than in the subject matter, or act good. It is desirable, therefore, that the knowledge derived by inquiry and investigation of the moral nature of the law directing them is a positive and fixed law, should be seen for their better appreciation of it, and to prevent the errors they are liable to, without such knowledge which is obtained by inquiry.

“Rights,”
their import-
ance con-
sidered.

To illustrate rights, considered as the authority men have in the law of their direction to good, I will first call the attention to their importance to mankind, and to the views that have been entertained, and the considerations given of the subject by others.

Rights, as the authority men have in the law directing them to good, involve the consideration whether men are to be well disposed, and are to act friendly and kindly towards one another, or whether they are to be ill-disposed, and act hostilely to one another; or whether men are to have respect

or consideration shewn them, or are of no account as to their good, or as to the contrary, their hurt and evil ; they being his authority in the law directing man to good, why man is to be respected or considered, and used well and kindly, and not be ill-treated, killed, or abused. Likewise, that what is constituted "Property," which institution is necessary for the use and benefit of man, he should be respected in that which belongs to him as such, or his own.

This is the purport or utility of rights, the claim he has in them, or that they give or are to man, for consideration of him, or his good. Let us further consider, therefore, the importance of them to man ; that without man had this direction to good, and this authority for respect or consideration of man, as good, he has no authority, morally, or in himself, for his being used well, or otherwise ill-treated, killed, or slain ; and men might for ever live hostile to one another, as wandering Tartars or Arabians, and as wild Indians or savages, and as all predatory nations or people do at this day, and there would be no cause as man could morally assign, or as man can see, and judge, and sanction, but for his rights or authority he has in the law directing him to good, and therefore should do good, or what is for the benefit of men, and should not hurt, kill, or destroy one another—there would be no criminality, or wrong, in doing evil, in the human estimation, nor in committing any act of abuse and violence, or

whatever injury or mischief they pleased, to one another. Men might be guilty of any iniquity, might be dishonest, fraudulent, or commit theft or robbery, murder, and be tyrannical, oppressive, unjust, and cruel; such are only terms of various offences to rights, and to the law directing him to good, and such evil or such injury and mischief might be committed by men if they had no law directing them to good.

We may, perhaps, rather say, man without rights, or the law directing him to good, would have no sense or idea of virtue or of vice; they would be insensible to truth, honesty, justice, mercy, or charity. This would be the case if man had no law directing him to good, because if men, or the power in men of mind, could not distinguish or comprehend the difference between their good or benefit, or the contrary, their hurt or injury, and did not approve, or, the same thing, had no direction to the former, and did not deprecate the latter, they would be without rule as to any knowledge of such within them, and virtue and vice might either of them be adopted indifferently.

They must either have power to see and know these things or matters, and a law or direction to the one, and as opposed to the contrary, or rule for the rejection of that, or they must be insensible beings to right or wrong in moral estimation, and indifferent alike as to one or the other, so as it pains them not, but in mental rule or law as to others,

they would have no discernment, discrimination, or regard, and would be the same as mere brutes, without mind or reason.

This is not the case, that men cannot or do not see virtue from vice; as all mankind do see and know, and advert generally to good; and this must be by some law directing them to it. But we give such opposing statement to the fact, to draw men's attention to the degraded state of human nature, were it so, that men could not and did not see good from evil, or virtue from vice; and to draw man's attention to the laws and rules of his moral nature, and which peculiarly distinguish him in such nature to raise him up above the condition of brutes, without mind or intellect to guide and govern them, which man is blessed with, and to rejoice in, and to exalt him above the brute creation; and which laws and rules of his peculiar nature we are about explaining or shewing to him, the better to see their direction to him, and the authority they are to him, and for all good, and that it is by them alone that he can claim his distinction from brutes, and claim any benefit of being recognized as man, and pretend to any consideration as such; and that through the regard and observance of them can his character as man only be truly recognized, or he truly lay claim to the consideration such laws or powers which exist in him, entitle him, and exalt him above other creatures by such considerations. For it is by the law or rule he has for his direction, and which renders him conscious of good, and the direction which

he has to it by that law, and which brute creatures have not, which is his great distinction and superiority above them.

The consideration of rights shews and explains this to us. Is it then of importance to man to inquire into, study and learn this law of his moral nature, more concerning what it is, how it acts to direct him, and what direction it is of to him? which though existing, and every one must know something of, he will not discover more than in practice, and that only imperfectly, because he cannot immediately see, and does not till he reflects, see, it is a law of his own nature directing him, and that it is really a law or rule of action of that peculiar nature, certain in its direction, and he will not discover this without inquiry, or it being pointed out to him, although practically by experience, in a degree observing it, and being the law or rule by means of which any good he does effect is accomplished.

Rights are his claim and his authority in man's direction by this law, that men should not act hostilely or unkindly, but have respect and consideration towards each other in what is their good.

I do not mean to say that the principle of rights, as claim or authority, is not known to men, for it is certain they are in some degree, or what is it that men refer to as such, mean? Let us see, then, what this knowledge consists in.

Qualification
with which
the want of

The principle of rights is acquired and known to all men practically, in self-love, we might say, or the esteem

information
on rights
must be
understood.

of their own good, and to which one man assumes, or has the same pretensions within himself as another has. A claim thus founded is seemingly fair and equal, and hence the idea of justice in equal or impartial consideration ; this is evinced again by justice, characterized in the emblem or figure with the scales, the balance, and blinded to avoid favour or partiality. And all men seem to be aware of, or to feel and know this. And in this claim to justice we have the practical knowledge of the claim or rights of man, as practically known to all ; and so far are rights generally recognized, if not asserted, or avowedly demanded or acted on, which from countervailing causes or circumstances they may not be. Yet it is so far known, that every man is capable of seeing, or at least feeling when he suffers a wrong or injustice, although from fear or interest he may not think it safe or prudent to assert his rights, or claim redress of his wrongs.

“ Rights ” ad-
verted to as
having been
more con-
sidered in
theory.

“ Rights,” in this sense of claim or title, have been more considered to exist in theory, or an imaginary ground of authority for the good or benefit experienced in them, or seen, if the principle was acted upon ; and thence are drawn out the regard or consideration due to man in respect, for instance, of his person, his life, his liberty, his property, justice, and the like. But the point that “ Rights ” no-
ticed as hav-

I contend for is, that they have real existence, and are not merely an hypo-

D

ing real moral thesis; for his rights, and that claimed existence. or asserted on them, and his actions in conformity with them, proceed on a fixed and positive law; this law we have spoken of in his moral nature, and which, if he has not already seen, if he will consider and inquire—as to himself, his power and means of direction, he cannot fail of seeing, and are here pointed out to him.

Therefore, when it is seen that there is a certain law or rule of action in the powers and means of his direction, when we strictly inquire into and examine those means, there can no longer exist a doubt of the authority he has, and his claim in that law, and that his rights, as the term by which he expresses himself, have real existence; sensible in existence to his mind and powers of perception, recognised within itself of its own action, and capable of being explained and pointed out for the instruction of all, in a plain and intelligible manner, as a law of his direction of his moral nature.

Distinguishing, and sensible of, this law and his authority in it, may we not expect the greater regard and respect of it, and the stronger inclination towards the good it directs him to, satisfied of his authority in it, past any doubt or question in the truth of its reality and existence. But we must guard our readers against expecting too much, and we are not to expect or suppose that by better knowledge of our law of direction, that we can render men perfect or eradicate vice. We can only hope to render more good, to make us better than with-

out such knowledge ; or better versed in medicine and the healing art, we may render men more healthy, and cure disease, and relieve hurts and injuries of body and limbs ; and as in better culture we can raise better grain, and more abundant fruits and crops ; by care breed finer and more useful cattle, and more numerous herds and flocks, so we can only hope in the moral developement to render more certain and abundant manifestation of it in good practice, in correctness, and the happiness produced by it.

Some knowledge of rights shown to exist.

That rights as a claim or authority, or sanction or justification of men, is known to men, however imperfectly, as

to the real nature of them, is most certain by the reference to rights, and by the mistake and confusion of the ideas men have upon the subject.

Men appear to know or learn the idea of rights, as necessarily they must, practically, in what they assert or claim, and they acknowledge the existence of them in the result of the good felt or experienced, and therefore satisfied in a manner in the authority they give, or the sanction supposed to exist under the assumption of them, as sanction or authority for the good resulting in maintaining what is so, or desirable to man. Practically knowing this, most people considering them are satisfied to abide in this assumption, (for it is little more, even their best explanations of rights,) and satisfied with such as they can give, appear content without seeking further to explain the subject.

Deficient knowledge of rights. But in proof of their errors and confusion, that are commonly fallen into, is mixing and confusing the object of their rights with right itself, as calling or styling the good itself the "right." Thus men call their life their right; or their own person their right; so they call their liberty their right; and justice their right; and their property their right. But it is quite evident, if we consider the subject of right, that our lives, our persons, or liberty, or justice, or property, are not our rights. Rights, referred to in the sense of claim or title, or authority, are not these things, and thus calling the object of the right the right itself, is mixing up the claim or authority for the thing or subject as one and the same with the claim for it. Rights are an act of the mental power or capacity. I have in my former work termed them one and the same with the approbation. In the result, as arising in the same law directing man's authority, they are the same with the approbation, but they are different acts of the mind. Rights are an act of the mind, the claim, or assertion of a claim, and of authority in such claim, while the life, or person of man, his liberty, or justice, is the matter or thing the object of that claim. Life and person, liberty and justice, are the mere objects of claim or rights, the subject matter the mind applies itself to and considers, and so considering, directed by the law of his moral nature or reason, claims or asserts authority by that for the object, and this act of the mind, the claim is the right.

That rights are a subject of reference and consideration of men, cannot be denied. Men perpetually mentioning them, and supporting their claims on the ground of the things claimed being their rights. Nor can it be denied, that that claim or authority which is assumed under them for man is considered of importance. There can be no question that rights are in some way known and recognized, when we find jurists, and philosophers in moral inquiry, advert to them to found a primary or original authority, or a rule or principle clear and incontrovertible, to sanction and justify all good and estimable considerations for man and society. To build and construct laws for securing the good and welfare of mankind in a state of civil society.

All jurists and moralists have felt the advantage of rights, or in other terms, of a fixed principle in morals, or founded in moral authority, of claim, or title, or justification of man in what was essential to his good, as his life, his person, liberty, justice and property, and the like ; and some have founded the right or claim to these in an inherent right or claim in man ; but they have assumed an existence of such rights, rather than shewn what they are, or consist in, and really do proceed from or exist in, and that they are the direction he has in the law existing in his peculiar nature, or moral powers or means. But the more abstruse or learned have, feeling the necessity or desirableness of giving them a real existence, resolved them into nature, and called them natural rights. The claim and justifi-

cation, or authority of men by such rights are supposed, or are assumed to exist in nature. Thus, as life is natural, or liberty is natural, these are supposed, I imagine, to be rights in nature, and therefore called natural rights.

But I do not see what such moral philosophers gain by that term, unless they can shew better than they have, what rights of nature mean. Mr. Hobbes is a great failure in this to any rational explanation, and other more rationally practical writers have not been more successful in their explanations that I am aware of. However, rights of nature they may be, as all things originate in nature, and these in his nature, or peculiar powers or means of the nature of man in mind, and constituting man a moral being. They are not the ordinary acceptation of nature, that which exists in itself spontaneously, as his life, body, or limbs, or person, generally, or power of action, of mind, of reason, of growth, or the like. They are the result of the action of this nature, which combine acquirement of knowledge as to things, consideration, and judgment, and action, directed by such means in relation to men; and with reference to man, they constitute in him a being different and distinguished from all others, by his peculiar powers and means of mind, and his proceedings or actions directed by that power.

The term of natural rights is referred to in all explanations and references of man as a primary or original authority to justify the claims of men to good, whenever requisite to refer to, or assert the

subjects of them, as life and liberty, or property to be respected or considered ; because the rights of men being thus assumed a fixed principle, is the authority of men to have such respect or consideration. But I am not aware that any jurist or moralist has shewn and explained rights to be the authority of a fixed and positive law of his moral nature directing man to good. This simple fact, that man is directed to good by the law of his moral nature, has yet been wanting for the instruction of men, and as an authority for their direction.

That the idea of a right, or a necessity of right, is considered to justify or sanction men in what is of apparent, essential importance or concern to them and society, may be exemplified in the case of "Property."

Mr. Locke, and other writers, in looking for, or endeavouring to explain the origin of right of "Property," and seeking some original or primary authority to raise or vest the right in property, or to found or establish that exclusiveness in a degree necessary to constitute it, have supposed what is inherent, or belonging to a man in his own person is his natural right, as a matter sacred, and which demands the first regard or respect of man. And then, although the earth, and all things wild or spontaneous, is open or common to all, yet feeling the good and necessity of property for the good of mankind, and the impossibility of proceeding in any civilized state without it, or in a peaceful or orderly state, unless it is respected, they seek to find an

original or primary right or authority to found it upon, or justify it. And it is enough to satisfy them, that they find out, although the earth and its various produce is open and common, yet that the labour or acquirement by art or skill, is a man's right by nature, and no one has a right to such man's labour but himself; and what land he reclaims from the wild, or tills, or cultivates, and brings to be fertile, and yield a produce by his own hands, is therefore made fruitful, improved, or serviceable for man by his art or labour, is therefore his, as it partakes of this right of nature. Such an argument is adverted to by Blackstone, apparently leaning to its plausibility, while he seems at the same time to rest on what is founded by law, and is found to exist in the laws.

Another great moralist, Paley, does not appear to admit its plausibility, but yet equally feeling with all others upon the subject, the importance of rights, at once assumes the "right to be in the laws of the land."

Paley, evidently not agreeing to the explanations given by others of rights, or the original authority for the institution of property, and not caring to enter into the explanation of them himself, and declaring the failure of all he had read dealing on the subject, is satisfied to get over the difficulty at once by asserting "the right to be in the laws of the land." Apparently not aware of what rights are, he refers to that which is the result of them.

Rights as the authority in the law directing man

to good, sanction and justify the institution of property for the good in it. And the civil laws, or statutes or ordinances of any state or society are but the conventional means of men for the promoting and effecting the institution of property. Rights, in a moral sense, are therefore the justification and sanction of such institution for the good, and of the conventional laws for the maintaining the good ; the necessity of which institution for that purpose is practically found or experienced in all states of society. "Rights" are not, therefore, that ordained by the laws of the land, but the laws of the land are that sanctioned by rights, and evidently proceeding under their authority for the perfecting or promoting the object in property sanctioned by "rights."

One and all, however differing in explanation, admitting the desirability of an original authority, and looking for the justification or sanction of the measure, and assuming a right, a claim, authority, a justification, to exist somewhere, or in something, to property. And this, evidently from feeling or experiencing the good resulting in its adoption, in the supposed real or imaginary authority, such was for the sanction of the institution of property, from the necessity of it for any good to men in society. But let it be observed, evidently, in looking for an authority, or imagining or supposing such, shewing men look for something beyond, and beside the good itself, for its sanction, authority and justification ; and so far shewing the authority or

right not to be the good sought to be established, supported, or maintained, but another and a distinct matter, and the right to be one thing, and the subject to which it refers, namely, the good, to be another.

Moralists and jurists in endeavouring to establish the authority for property, appear to mistake the means or mode of acquirement for the right. The labour is, whatever that may be, manual, or of art, or skill, but the mode of acquirement; and which, the convention of men or the laws—sanction, and wisely, and decree as lawful and just, and give the civil right in law; but such is not the primary or original ground, or the moral authority or justification of property, which is that being of good, men have the authority for it of the law directing them to good. And if property had not the moral authority for it, in the law directing man to good, which property is; laws, as the civil or conventional authority of men, would be no sanction, as man might and would, without the moral law directing him to esteem the institution of it for good, hold, wherever he could, the law at defiance; and he might, and if he had power and means, set the laws aside to take that which no man could justify exclusive power and privilege over, and to the deprivation of others, unless for that object for which it received the moral authority, in the law directing man to good; which moral authority the term rights, as referred to here and explained, mean or represent. The laws themselves adopt and justify

property, they practically effect the moral law on the ground of the good found or experienced in it ; but men do not sufficiently see, or have not as yet sufficiently seen, the law directing him to good is the moral authority for it, nor do they so sufficiently see this law as to be able to explain it.

No case can be more strongly or better exemplified, than that men know and refer to a right, or some authority or justification morally, for the adoption of the good they feel or experience is resulting from property ; and the impracticability of the existence of society well or peaceably without the institution ; by their seeking or referring to, and endeavouring to explain the cause of the adoption or constituting of such measure.

In the one instance, calling it a right acquired, by what is a person's own, as his personal labour, or by assuming but not shewing the right to that ; or in the other as authorized by conventional law, and seeking a primary or original authority beyond the matter or thing itself, property, for its sanction, its justification, or the possessor's claim to it. And moreover, that satisfied with the explanation they arrive at, or give of it, they assume or assert that right or claim to exist, to justify and uphold ulterior measures in laws for its support, management, maintenance, and preservation. Sensible of the good or beneficial result of the subject itself, and are contented to proceed with such explanation as they can give, however clumsily pretended, or assumed to be made out, or inefficiently done for the purposes of

shewing the truth of the right, and which really does exist in the direction man has to good in the law of his moral means.

But it is clear that right is therefore known, and referred to by men. It is felt practically, and the good resulting or apparent from it, justifies them in assuming an existence of such authority, but which they are still far from having shewn or explained truly what it is.

Whence right is derived, its origin, or its authority, is any thing but unravelled or satisfactorily explained ; while it is very evident, had these jurists considered a little further upon the subject, and analyzed their ideas or meaning upon the subject of rights, what they mean by them, and whence that arose, which was their authority, and what that they deemed authority was ; had they only done this ; had they only asked themselves a little further, what that right, or claim, or justification, they all practically feel and know, and find the necessity of for the good resulting, they might have arrived at and seen that the good of man, and necessity of property for that good, and that man has his direction and authority for this good in the law of his moral nature, they might have seen the law directing man to good, and that it was his authority and his right. They would have unravelled the difficult point of civil or conventional law running together with right, (as the direction of man in his reasonable nature to good, and which is his authority,) as it does, and in aid and conformity in

the practical attainments of moral good, and in fact springing out of it, as laws do for the promoting what the moral authority directs men to do ; laws being the conventional means to give rule or regulation for that constituted property, and which the moral authority sanctions and justifies for good.

Adversion to
causes which
have stood
in the way
of moral
science.

But there may have been many causes which operated to the prevention of man unravelling the law and science of morals, and discovering his real authority called rights, (which occasions we shall consider hereafter, and therefore will only notice just passing, for the present,) and that would prevent men readily seeing and explaining what the rights of men are, although knowing them, in practically feeling the good they are in authority.

This occasion has been, that men could never conceive that the mind, which only practically saw, felt, considered, and directed ; and as a general power of agency in man directed alike to good and evil, and that as well as the best effects and acts come from the cognizance of the mind, yet the worst likewise did the same. Even the reflecting man would, referring only to its failings, moreover see, that the errors, mistakes, and misjudgments man made, and through the operations of his mind, that it could not be a safe authority, that could be referred to in the support and sustaining what was really good, virtuous, or admirable in man ; but he would see such a frail, inefficient, and apparently, till rightly viewed, misdirecting authority as the mind

was, under a view of the vice practised under its cognizance, and the errors, and mistakes, and mis-judgments committed by the wisest and most learned of men and philosophers, could never be in his imagination an authority to establish and promote only what was good and virtuous. He would never see that such frail and weak, and fallible means, so viewed, could be authority to man, and as such authority, his rights; and in truth and fact as it is, the source, and power, and means whence his rights, his authority, and justification emanate and exist.

Every or any explanation would be sought for by the very power, the mind itself, directing him, rather than the recognition of itself, being that very power and authority itself, it was seeking for.

The mind, the very power acting, judging, considering what was right or wrong, good or bad morally, in the blindness of its own nature not considering itself, and looking inwardly, and asking or inquiring of itself its own nature, and seeing itself alone to be the sole directing agent of the moral man, would never see its own pre-eminence, its own good and serviceable qualities for the being possessing it; and thus would the gem, the brightest gift of Providence to his creature, not only be unseen in its virtues, but spurned, neglected and despised, as it has been, as regards its moral excellence in his government or direction, through ignorance of its virtues. The oft-repeated common place observation of the insufficiency of the human means, the mind, for the direction of man, we all must know, and read

of every day, never reflecting that if it is such insufficient means, man has no other in himself, and thus disparaging it, totally failing or neglecting to consider what the means, he is possessed of in his mind, are really afforded to him by it. The mind, misconceiving in itself its own capacities, contemning itself in its own failings and weakness, man, by the power alone by which he is distinguished for any pre-eminence, and can be, and is raised to any virtue or any excellence in man, has neglected, and does neglect, in not inquiring into the nature and power of his mind to direct him, the only means he has as man to direct him, and which gives him pre-eminence above all other earthly beings and things.

The source giving him power and knowledge in every thing of which he has power and knowledge, and raising him pre-eminently above every creature and thing beside in creation, alone never inquiring into or looking to itself, passes by that power itself so raising the being possessing it, above every thing beside created, in moral estimation.

I here only advert to the fact, that it has only been the want of proper inquiry into the case of his own peculiar nature, that has kept him in ignorance of it, to encourage us in the hope, that the knowledge of himself in his own power, or means of direction, may not be so difficult to see and satisfy him of, if he will take the trouble when the inquiry is made for him, and the truth and facts pointed out to him, to investigate and consider them.

The fact of the error existing, that men consider rights under the idea of "natural rights."

That rights are supposed to exist in nature, and that men in their claims and justification of any subject essentially of good, in referring to an original ground or authority for their support, that cannot therefore be contravened, refer to, or speak of natural rights, is most certain. We may refer to almost all authors in confirmation of this. Jurists and the great authorities for the establishment of the civil codes of the nations of Europe, the *jus gentium*, and moralists of modern Europe, and especially of our own country, from the time of Locke to the present day, who all speak of or refer to the natural rights of man, as the great and primary authority that man has to found his claims or pretensions to his life, his person, his liberty, and justice, and generally the moral course or direction of man. There is not a public speech made, or book written, having reference to this primary authority of man in the maintenance of rights, but refer to and speak of them under "natural rights."

That rights are held in esteem, and of importance, and are referred to by jurists, by legislators, by advocates and patriots, as the ground or authority to base or found the claims of men to justice, respect, and consideration of their interests, and concerns of most importance to them, is not to be denied; and that they are considered natural, or are derived from, or exist in nature, we may give an instance in a case of no very distant occurrence in the senate of

this country, where they were referred to, and as existing as a matter of nature, by a very eminent and learned civilian and jurist of the present day; and in a speech delivered as if for the purpose of giving the most learned and profound authority for the attention and direction of those legislating, who might be less informed in the profound subject of abstract principles, as an original and indispensable base to found just legislation upon as affected rights, in the very important subject then under discussion.

The occasion was that of passing the New Marriage Act, to relieve Dissenters from certain grievances they were considered to be labouring under from the law of marriage as it then existed, according to the established law of the land, and to allow them to adopt their own forms, but requiring such to acknowledge, by a civil act before a magistrate, the contract they entered into. The eminent and learned person alluded to, Dr. Lushington, in his argument, adverts to the claims of the Dissenters, to be respected in their own forms, or rather it should appear by the argument, to have no forms at all, and complains of the hardship and injustice suffered by them, in being obliged to follow the form of marriage, as prescribed in the established law. Dr. Lushington's speech, though short, is apparently delivered as a studied and profound exposition of the fundamental principles of law, and of their foundation upon rights, and thence inferring the respect due to Dissenters in their claims, or rights to consideration in the subject of their con-

sciences in the religious part of the ceremony, as imposed by the established law ; and he expressly lays down those rights as "natural rights," and on that ground that Dissenters, as men, are entitled to respect past doubt or denial on abstract principles of justice, and claims for them not to be bound by the formula of the law of marriage according to the Established Church.

Dr. Lushington's speech is remarkable, and therefore I will give it as stated in the "Times" newspaper of the 29th June, 1836, on the third reading of the Marriage Bill, 28th June.

Dr. Lushington is represented to say, in reference to the Dissenters, that they claimed relief as a right, namely, "the power of contracting marriage without being subject to a religious test. He (Dr. L.) would state the footing on which they claimed it. They considered the right to celebrate marriage, according to their *rites and ceremonaries*, as a natural right ; and that Parliament itself had no title to prescribe *forms and ceremonies for that rite*, except so far as the general benefit of the community required the prevention of clandestine marriages. The Dissenters said, and he said with them, that the right of marriage was given by Providence, and it was not for man to impose restrictions on it. He went a step further. The Dissenters had a right to be put on the same footing as the members of the Church of England, and to celebrate marriages in their own chapels according to their own forms. (*Cheers.*) If a declaration was

required, it was a violation of a natural right. It might be the opinion of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Goulburn), and perhaps his own, that the addition of a solemn and religious *rite* gave to marriage a more binding and obligatory force; but the Dissenters did not think so," &c. &c.

I do not quote Dr. Lushington's speech or argument of the respect claimed for rights, as agreeing to it, in the application to the subject then under consideration of the legislature; but as shewing that one of the most learned and profound jurists and civilians of the day claimed the respect and consideration of the Dissenters to justice, in being regarded or respected in their notions as to marriage, on the authority of right, and that was on "natural right."

The learned and profound civilian, in a speech to edify and instruct those members of the legislature in passing a law on so solemn and important subject as marriage, in reference to the forms of marriage, to base the rights of Dissenters not to be circumscribed by the form of the Established Church, calls such rights their "natural rights," and confirming that which has been stated of the idea men have of rights, that they are "natural rights," and rest on, or are founded in nature, and that such idea is referred to and adopted by the most learned men of the day.

I am not entering into the argument or application of the authority of rights as used by Dr. Lushington, or to question or dispute the consistency of the ap-

plying of a supposed natural right to found or justify religious rites or ceremonies of any particular sect, and to celebrate marriage according to their own forms ; I leave the adjustment of this point to the discrimination of the legislators and others whom Dr. Lushington was enlightening, and who accorded with Dr. Lushington ; but I refer to the argument as shewing the idea existing, which men, and learned men have of rights, as human authority or sanction, and that such rights are considered as "natural rights," and the reference made to them as authority and ground to base the claim men have to be respected in the highest and most important power exercised by men, of legislation ; and to shew that even the most learned and talented men, and men looked up to as the first authority as civilians and jurists, may, if the idea here given of rights is correct, not be versed in the true and correct knowledge of rights ; that although knowing something of them, and adverting to them, as the very highest claim or authority with men, they are not yet sufficiently acquainted with them to explain them, and apply them with propriety in argument, and consequently, for want of proper and correct knowledge of the subject, misuse or misapply them.

Dr. Lushington in his argument applied a general rule or authority as a ground for a particular exception ; and in a measure of general legislation as that of the established law of the land for the subject of marriage, which, as a subject connected with and involving the general interests and general good

of the society, all the subjects of the state belonging to the reformed church are bound by and are required to observe. And it is unfair, it is unjust, by others, to favour or shew partiality to any class, part or a portion of individuals dissenting only in particular notions of their own, and exempt them from the common regulations applicable to all for the general good. If favour or partiality is shewn, or an exception to a general law or rule for the general good is made, particular or special circumstances can only require, or justify it, and such may be the case with religion in regard to marriage.

Religion is the highest authority ; but men differ and vary in their religion. If their particular religion requires particular forms and observances in marriage, and such interferes not with the general good, which good, must be in reason, and according to the powers of human comprehension of the attributes of the Deity, the rule of all religion, (however mistaken or perverted by men to profanations, or for sinister objects,) such particular forms, or rites, or ceremonies, may form ground to be respected or regarded in legislation, and in the executive part of the law.

But "Rights," I humbly conceive, form no part of special or particular regard, favour or exception of a class, or a part or portion, or a sect of the society.

Rights are the ground or authority on which the claims of all men rest, and rest alike, to respect or

consideration ; and, as a general rule, are the authority in legislation, or in legislating, which entitle men to equal respect and consideration in the laws, but to bind them all equally and alike as subjects of the laws ; and unless there exist causes, as may be the case, for variation or exception, all are equal subjects of the law, and one cannot and ought not to be regarded or considered more than another.

In legislating, therefore, for the public good, or general good, no individuals, no class, no party, no sect, can claim exemption or particular consideration in the law under a general rule for the consideration of all, and which applies to all alike, as rights do ; but if such claim, or pray for special regard, or consideration, or exception, it must be on some special ground or cause, which shall entitle them to it, and which may be conceded to them without inconvenience, or endangering the wholesome and just principle of equal consideration, sanctioned by the general rule of rights.

Dissenters might claim or hope for consideration, and exception from the general law of marriage, on the ground of conscience in their religion ; such might form ground for shewing them favour or exception from the general rule of the law of marriage. But Dr. Lushington claimed this consideration for them on the general rule of rights ; and whatever Dr. Lushington's ideas of rights were, he applied a rule of general application, which comprehends and binds all alike, as a ground for special exception.

Another public example may be given of the state of knowledge on the subject of "Rights," in the case of Lord Brougham, in advocating the New Poor Law Act, when that measure was brought up to the House of Lords; on which occasion the noble lord complains "that parish allowance gave ideas to the poor of strict 'right,' which other charities did not." As if the poor had no rights. It being quite evident that the bill passed in the lower house of Parliament could not be supported or tolerated with the existence of rights, and the two could not consistently in any reasonable mind exist together.

No one will do otherwise than bow in deference to the comprehensive talents or genius of that nobleman, of whom with truth it may be averred he is surpassing most men. Yet that nobleman boldly affirmed and maintained that measure which passed as a law; it being past dispute in the judgment of the legislators who accorded to that measure that the poor had no "rights" to entitle them to consideration, otherwise than as subjects of a system in principle of the most despotic character, under which they may be subjected to the most tyrannical and oppressive exercise of power distinct from the rest of the society, and have the greatest cruelty and most fatal severity exercised upon them.

Here, then, is another instance in which rights are alluded to among the most enlightened and learned members of the state. Proof that they are known and recognized, but I may venture to affirm, not with a true and sufficient knowledge of them

for a due and correct application of them, or of force and weight to command that respect of them to be really regarded, as the true principle for respect and consideration of man.

It was not the want of great and general learning and knowledge, and of genius or talent, that brought to pass that cruel and disgraceful act of my countrymen. The legislators promoting that measure were men of the highest acquirements in learning and comprehensiveness of mind, arraigning whose acts I might be thought presumptuous, but that I consider the subject of "rights" was not thoroughly known, inquired into, and examined, and the truth of their real existence established; and consequently were not duly appreciated and respected as the first principles of all human proceedings or rule of action of regard and consideration of man.

But I profess to point out the law of the moral nature, on which rests the foundation of human authority, and on which are the "rights" of all men established to their good, and to respect and consideration in what is so; and I cannot pass by without notice a measure of such offence to humanity, of such disgrace to my country and my countrymen, as a measure contrary to moral law, and a denial of "rights."

I labour to correct and direct mankind through the competency of the mind as the means of direction characterizing man; and I will hope by the truths so plainly to be shewn and set forth, of the law of the direction to good in that moral means of

the mind, to open that power for the government of man, and to render him obedient to the law of the direction he has in reason as a reasonable being, by shewing him its law. And I will yet hope to live to see that day when the legislature of this great nation shall, of its own and one accord, and by some signal acknowledgment of its error, expunge that mistaken, but in effect most criminal act, against the poor and destitute, from the statute-book of these realms.

The poor are a body of society who are alike the offspring of the necessities of such state, as they are the subjects of the designation of God, creating man with his moral means to form society ; and of which they form a part, and of necessity, in every large and civilized state, a very large component portion, and for which He has created man with humanity through his intellect to regard his fellow man.

I would not have it supposed that in mentioning the names of Lord Brougham and Dr. Lushington, I bring them forward in wantonness, or out of any disrespect ; but to shew that men of the greatest and most undoubted talents, and whose merits in that respect cannot be too much admired, and cannot be exalted more than they at present stand deservedly in the estimation of their fellow countrymen, are proof of the insufficiency of science hitherto arrived at in the moral law, and the consequent defective state of the knowledge of the authority of "rights," for want of science in the moral law pre-

vailing among the most talented men and learned in other branches of knowledge ; and it may be justly said, that such insufficiency of knowledge has been owing only to the want of means of instruction in proper expositions of the subject, for want of due inquiry into it, or an unprejudiced examination of it.

It will be plain, however, from what has been said, that rights are in a measure known and adverted to, and are referred to as the first or original authority for respect and consideration of men ; and are a rule claiming the direction of governments and law-givers in making laws, and in fact, are an authority practically ruling and presiding over every thing moral as human, and which requires every act to be in conformity to them, or being otherwise, to be esteemed or not by man.

They are the authority of man in the law of his direction to good, and which governs every thing as it is esteemed or not by man, being in accordance or not with that law.

But to come back to the point that rights are known or felt by all, but on what they rest or depend, or how arising or existing, the mind of the general mass of mankind is not open to ; and with men of the greatest genius and talent, and deepest learning of the present day, the dependence on a supposed existence of natural rights, and an assumption that it is the highest idea of such authority, is the best explanation that appears to be arrived at, and resorted to, in support of the highest and dear-

est interests of humanity, in life, property, and justice.

Such have been, and are, it may be said, to this day, the views entertained of rights, that they are a claim, an authority, or title of men to certain things indispensable to their good, as life, person, liberty, property, and justice, that these are natural rights ; and without further explanation men assume that is their authority, and the things are, being congenial to his nature, so reasonable in themselves, that the right or title of men assumed, (existing or not,) are justified and justifiable ; and mankind appear content to rest their authority on such ground without scruple or doubt, apparently considering further explanation a fruitless attempt.

That rights are important as an authority, and that some acquaintance with them is known, is therefore evident, or men would not refer to them, or assert them, when looking for a primary or superior authority in human estimation or supposition, on which they rest their abstract claims to respect and consideration, or good.

It has been my endeavour to seek and explain what "rights" are, as this claim or authority men resort to, or rest on, for the good they claim, as supported on them ; and thence the respect and consideration due to man or humanity. I shew what this authority is or consists in, how it arises and exists in man, in human nature, the better to satisfy men of its real existence, in a certain mode of action of his moral means or power moving and

directing man ; and to shew him the truth of it, and to shew him plainly that it is a law of his nature, not of common nature, or a natural right, but of his own peculiar nature, or the moral nature or means in man, and a course of acting in such means, and is a law of his direction to good. The subject of my labours has been to explain and shew this.

The law or principle of the moral nature in man may not excite much attention with some. The course, and habits, and knowledge in morals serving to direct men, and practically so, sufficiently at least in the estimation of those instructed in, and practising the modes directed by such means as men have arrived at, or have been accustomed to, that any new idea is considered almost useless. By most considered intrusive, and by very many as an offensive innovation on the received notions and ideas of mankind upon the subject, especially when under the strong influence of ignorant prejudices.

Before, however, I proceed to such further exposition as I propose here, that I hope will put every man clearly in possession of the law moving him for his direction, past any the most scrupulous doubt or question, I will again repeat what I have said in an earlier part of this book, that rights are the only authority that man has from himself for good, meaning in this, the respect and consideration of life, or person, liberty, property, and justice, or any other earthly good ; and that without rights, as to any authority in man, or any thing man can see or dis-

cern, men might perpetrate any iniquity, violence, or inhumanity against man ; but the law and rule man has for his direction in his moral nature is his authority, and as such are his rights, and for the respect and consideration of man, and the promotion of all human good, as dependent on man, and consequently are opposed to, and forbid iniquity and inhumanity, as contrary to good. I do, therefore, consider it to be of the very first and most essential importance to man, that the law of the moral nature of man for his direction, be explained and set forth to him in the clearest and plainest manner it is capable of being given to him ; and it is the first duty and object of our lives to know and to learn, and to be acquainted with this moral nature, and the rule of direction we have in it.

In rights, or this authority men refer to as such, we are looking to a sanction or justification which men have within themselves, or arise in their own estimation or judgment, of what they ought to have, and should be, as regards them as men morally, or as resting with men, and that it is governed by a certain law, that of his moral nature in reason. It is clearly an estimation, such claim or title existing within or belonging to themselves as men, because it is that of which they judge as founding their claim or title, and thence to ground all the respect and consideration, or regard of men, in the conventional laws, or what they can justly call for or claim of governments, or at the hands of other men, of regard or consideration of their "rights."

This we cannot doubt one moment, if we refer to those writers on the subject of claims or title men have to consideration, or why men should be regarded by laws or rules of humanity, as mercy and charity, and be treated justly, or have justice dispensed to them. Grotius, Puffendorff, Locke, and even Hobbes, all refer to rights, or claim or reasons within or concerning men, that entitle them to consideration, and in what is good and just.

There is one thing further I will notice; in all references to rights, assertions of them, and explanations, that resting on natural rights, the greatest defect of this insufficient explanation this is to ground them, that in no case it is shewn how the duties of men arise, or what is their source or the moral authority of man; and like rights, they are only known in the practical good; but the origin of them in the law of the mental powers of man are not explained. They are, however, in the moral exposition of rights, beautifully developed in the same law or authority man has directing him to good; also directing him to do that which in reason, necessarily must be good, as a reasonable being governed and directed by reason, to be consistent with, or in conformity with, the character distinguishing him as a moral or reasonable being, and as resting with, or within, his power to effect.

I now proceed to the more particular consideration of the subject of the law of the moral means directing man, which I have before alluded to in the earlier part of this work.

EXPOSITION OF THE LAW.

*Exposition of
the law di-
recting man.*

IN making this inquiry for the direction of man, we refer to the powers and means which man has, and is blessed with, of mind, characterizing and distinguishing him and his actions from all other created things and beings known to him. The chief quality or property of mind consists in reason, the governing and prevailing effect of which is recognized in, and marks more or less, every thing that is human.

As we are considering what has hitherto been held to be an abstruse subject, as the laws of the human mind directing man, to render plain and evident to the comprehension what are the laws or rules of direction we have in the mind distinguishing man as a being different to all other beings, and the chief and distinguishing quality or property of the mind is in reason, it will be a question that will present itself, what is this principal or chief quality alluded to of reason? and it may be expected that some description of it be given, to understand it, and confine ourselves to the meaning of that term so often referred to, and so principally directing us.

*Reference to
the moral
means of the
mind.*

It might almost be asked, what is the mind? To this, however, we shall only refer to that power as generally

understood, and observe, Do we know we possess mind, or how could we think, consider, and act, by what it directs us? Do we know we possess reason, or how could we know we judge and act reasonably? And are we conscious of this? Then we know what mind and reason is, and what is spoken of as mind and reason. I am not inquiring into the nature, or powers, or properties of mind, as to what it consists of, and describing these. This is a subject that has frequently been attempted by many; and Locke, and of more modern days, Dugald Stewart, have written much upon this subject. And I will not say how far any ideas or principles resulting from the labours and publications of these writers may or may not interfere with any view or principle here stated.

I consider the laws or rules of the mind's direction to man, and the practical consideration of such laws. I have taken my own views from the considerations I have bestowed upon the subject on which I write, conformably or not with the views of others, or opposed to principles or considerations maintained by others, I cannot undertake to point out or remark upon. What I have done, I have given upon my own views, reflections, and considerations. What I state as to the moral law I have given from these considerations, and the facts of the moral nature as they appear to me, as well as I have been able to investigate and discriminate, upon the subject considered; and I must leave it to others to judge of my labours, and say whether that which I have

stated is made apparent to their understanding, and I am correct or not.

I do not inquire into the nature, properties, or qualities of that power or means of man, of mind, more than as to the law of its direction to us, the beings possessing that power, and the practical consideration of the law.

The law of that power possessed by, and distinguishing man, of mind, in its direction to him, is all that I inquire of and state here. The property or quality in it of reason being the principal or chief property distinguishing the mind, is greatly resembled in capacities and qualities of other creatures; as memory, volition, judgment in a degree on present things and objects, and a species of reflection produced by association of immediate objects operating on the memory as to things, and causing present action, all form a contrast to, and remarkable similitude of reason, by some called instinct; but I think, with deference, not what properly should be called by that term, that meaning more a nature or property as to mode of action of animals they cannot help or avoid: or if we call those fixed properties or modes of action natures, then we might call this other action of animals instinct, and approaching to reason in the sagacity, coupled with the docility, of the dog, and the oft-called half-reasoning elephant; as likewise the mimickry and similitude of form in the monkeys and apes, seem to approximate humanity; and while curious and interesting to contemplate these latter as the wonderful

diversity of nature, serves as a warning, appalling and humiliating, to us in reflection of the appearance of man, characterized in a brute void of reason.

Yet that we may know what we mean by reason so often referred to, and principally characterizing the human mind without attempting to describe it, I would rather refer to effects by which it may be known.

"Reason," what meant by it as a power or property. I will, however, offer the following attempt to describe the subject, and bring within our views that which we are considering, and the base and groundwork the foundation of all that is human, and characterizes the man, as I have before said. I shall not enter into the various properties of the mind, as perception, memory, thought, imagination, reflection, comparison, judgment, and will, or any other qualities it possesses, and which rather applies to its constituent nature, or its physical properties, than to its practical power and effects in direction, the subject of our consideration, and as such direction applies to the subject of morals.

Reason I would describe as a power or means in man of discerning, or enabling us to discover truths or realities in the matters or subjects considered, by agreement or harmony, and what is consistent with, or is so in that considered, and of enabling the mind to distinguish in its esteem, judgment, or decision, that which satisfies the mind in what is correct or right, in distinction to what is an error or wrong.

"Reason" known in effect by consistency or agreement.

In effect, reason is known by the consistency, or the agreement, correspondence and harmony of our views and judgment of any subject considered or judged of, and in regard to which we are to decide or give an opinion, and are to act, or may have to advise and act. Which consistency, being in his power, or being in want of power in inaptitude, of discerning, marks the character of sanity or insanity of mind. Reason may be said to be known principally by consistency, or what is consistent with that considered, or the object of consideration ; and reason may be known in effect by what is consistent, or the consistency of our judgment or decision on the subject considered, and the object of our considerations ; as what is healthful is fit, right, or proper for man, or what preserves or sustains life, and safety of life or person, is also fit, right and proper, and such are consistent for man, and are reasonable.

It is in this view of reason that I refer to what is so called, and what is reasonable in any mention made of it ; and therefore, that by the consistency of our judgment, our estimations, our conclusions, and our actions and proceedings taken, or to be adopted, do we know them, or judge of them to be reasonable.

In this inquiry for the direction of man, I therefore ask, what is his direction by the power or means man has in his mind ? And in reason it is by what is consistent, or in agreement with, accords with,

or is fit, proper, wholesome, of use, benefit, or service, agrees with, or in harmony with man ; this is consistent, and this is good for man. This is reasonable, and this is his direction according to reason, or as a reasonable being by the power of his mind. The direction of man as a moral being by reason to good, is the authority or the sanction, or justification which man has for his good, which as a reasonable being is in that which accords with that quality, and is reasonable as his good is, in what is fit, proper, or beneficial for man, which is consistent for man, and therefore reasonable. Such is the authority of man through the power or means of his mind, and his reason in that which characterizes and distinguishes him as a moral or reasonable being.

This is a simple and plain truth, and matter of fact. That reason characterizing man is a law directing man to good by what is reasonable, in that which is fit, proper, or of benefit to man, congenial and in harmony for his being or existence, and therefore consistent, and therefore reasonable.

Man directed, therefore, by his mind in reason, esteems, or judges, or decides well or favourably of, and acts according to, what is fit, proper, of benefit, or promotive of it, or preventive of hurt or injury ; and this is good, this is consistent, and is accordant to reason, and is reasonable ; and directed, therefore, by reason, man is directed to good ; and his reason is a law, we see, in his moral nature or power of mind, directing him to good.

We may not, see, or always be able to see, or

judge, or decide what is fit, or proper, or is of benefit, or will be so, or prevent hurt or injury ; but as we do see this, and when we see this, or think or believe we do, directed by reason, we approve it, or think, or judge well of it, and act according to what we see is so fit, proper, or of benefit. But there may be causes which prevent our seeing what is fit, proper, or of benefit, or good ; and there may be causes, although seeing and knowing what is fit, proper, or of benefit and good, which oppose our acting according to what is so, or make or induce us to act contrary to what is fit, proper, or of benefit and good, and even where it may be in our power or ability to do what is good. But of these causes, opposing the direction we have in our reason to good, and preventing our acting in accordance with this law, and doing good, we shall consider hereafter in their proper places.

The importance of this law has been in a measure considered in " Rights ;" but it is necessary further to observe, in explanation of the law, here, that by it man is directed to his good, which being without he would not, or might not be. His direction would be casual, accidental, uncertain, and he might or might not do what is good, or the contrary.

Had not man his direction by his reason to good, he might do the contrary, or do evil, or any act wrong, improper, unfit, hurtful, and without care or regard to his actions being wrong or improper, and that which he should not do. But by the powers of his mind, he acquires knowledge of good in reason, in

that which is fit, proper, or of benefit, or promotive of it, and preventive of hurt ; and with knowledge of this he has the means of his election of, and direction to good, and in preference to, and rejection of, and abstaining from, the contrary.

It is by reason man thus does good, with knowledge of it in what is fit, proper, or of benefit, his reason being a rule or law, that acting in conformity with it, is a direction to, and preference to good ; which being without the means of reason for his direction, he might not prefer the good, but elect or do the contrary. As in the case of brute creatures without mind, or irrational creatures who may not see or have knowledge of what is of good to them, and who, only governed by pleasure or inducement, would not regard the good where pleasure or attraction lured or induced them to that which was contrary to their good, and would not care to regard one another, or feel injustice or impropriety if not acting so, which man with knowledge of good, seeing or discerning it, would adopt by reason, or his direction according to that, what was so, or that fit, proper, or of benefit, and reject and abstain from the contrary ; and with reference to his fellow creatures, would, by the same rule, or law, and means of direction, regard their good, and abstain from their hurt or injury, and know that was right for man, and the contrary was wrong.

By reason, therefore, man has a certain law directing man, or pointing out to him his good, and for his proceeding in conformity with it. Although

it is not certain of control, for as a fallible being in his want of power to see, or judge correctly, or from bad or wrong inclinations, he may fail to do good. But without which power or law, like brute creatures, he would not have such direction, or would be destitute of such, and might or might not do good, or the contrary, without knowledge or regard of its being right or wrong, or the propriety or the impropriety of his actions, and of what we term a moral sense of feelings arising in our knowledge of such estimations.

- The moral power exalts man, and de-signed. In the moral means and moral sense man stands alone in the creation, exalted by it above other creatures ; and it is for him, by the design of Providence, manifested in blessing man with such means, to make use of them, and to be directed and governed by them ; and for the better and more certain fulfilling this duty, it is essentially necessary to study and consider this moral nature, and the direction he has in it, to proceed the better in conformity with it, and fulfil and perform the office and duties assigned man in this respect ; and which knowledge is necessary, because without it men, though possessing the moral means, may in ignorance act contrary to it, pervert it, and abuse it ; as we see at this day, and the records of history afford abundant proof, that where this knowledge is wanting, or sufficient acquaintance with it is not obtained or arrived at, the actions, habits, modes and manners of men are much perverted and abused in regard of the view or know-

ledge they have of their good, and their proceedings for effecting that; and consequently not in conformity with the law and authority they have in their reason, when seen, for their direction, and by the more correct knowledge of which they can by it alone, as rests with them, hope to act more correctly; and the more true and certain knowledge of which we can only hope to obtain or arrive at, by studying this moral nature, and seeing its law or rule as we would study any other subject.

This law or authority man recognizes, acknowledges, or signifies by his "approbation" in approving his good; by his "rights" in his claim to it, or asserting it; and by his "duties" in his conscience, or moral obligation, for what he should do, or ought to do and observe, and is required for it. This law directing man to good is in conformity with his disposition, in his natural inclinations and desires for his good; and his moral nature or mental direction, and his animal nature in his natural inclinations, so far are in accordance.

But in this respect, man as a moral being is carried beyond the mere instincts or sagacity of animals, by the abilities he has in his mind enabling him to inquire, see, and judge, and discriminate what will accomplish it, or be requisite to accomplish his views of his good and welfare, and his plans, modes and undertakings for such object. It likewise raises up in man his moral considerations of what he can approve and esteem, his rights in what he can claim, and above all, his duties in his

moral obligation of acting according to the law or rule he has directing him in his moral nature of reason, to be in conformity with that character and distinction such moral nature raises in him, and entitles him to have respect and regard as such. The object of his moral considerations, as the human good, this good he is directed to by the law of his moral nature, and he is in such authority bound and enjoined in, and in his pre-eminent distinction of a reasonable being, in his consciousness of what is in accordance with this law directing him, he is responsible for doing as approving and claiming the distinction of such being. And all men having the same, or similar law, have all the same or similar authority for their good, and which entitles all the human race to their good, and are their rights, all equally and alike ; and all to consideration and respect in what is their good ; and imposes the duty and obligation on all men to do good, and respect one another in what is their

The moral
means raise
up in man the
recognition
of Divine
Power.

good. And above all, his moral means carries him forward in his reflections to the Great First Cause of nature, and a Creator ; to whom he is especially bound by the distinction he, man, is blessed with, of his mind and reason, and elevating him above all other beings in the creation in that means. To the Supreme Being, therefore, is he bound, in homage and humble duty, to regard and to follow that law implanted in his peculiar nature, and enabling him by his inquiries, and re-

search, and his judgment, to see, learn and know for his direction ; and which given to him, it is evidently the design of the great primeval and intelligent cause in the Creator, in his creature man ; and who is thus consciously responsible for fulfilling that design, as rests with him to see, and to learn, and to execute.

These acts of recognition of his mind of this law directing man, I have before observed, exist only in what is reasonable, and are the direction of his reason in what is agreeable, fit, proper, or of benefit for man, and good, and therefore consistent, therefore reasonable ; but, as likewise has been observed, did men not recognize their "approbation," their "rights," and their "duties ;" or were they to question or deny them ; nevertheless, as a reasonable being, their direction by reason will be to good, according to the effect or way in which that power or quality is known, by what is consistent with, fit, proper, in agreement with, of use, service, or benefit for the subject considered, and good. As a reasonable being, therefore, man is directed by reason to good, by what accords with, or is agreeable to the subject considered ; for directed according to reason, that only is reasonable which is consistent, or fit, proper, agrees with, is of use, service, or benefit for that considered, and is good ; and morally, by what is consistent with, fit, or proper, or of benefit to man, and is good as concerns man. And as man having the privileges or distinction of a reasonable being, and the respect and consider-

ation due to man as such, directed in accordance with reason, he is necessarily directed to good ; and it is quite evident that this law directing man to good is a fixed and positive law directing him by what is reasonable, and which is good.

In the direction of man by this law of his moral nature in reason to good, there are two subjects of good referred to as such ; that subject considered which as to itself is good, and that which is fit, proper, agrees with, is of use, service, or benefit to it. These, as to the subject moral, or man, are man himself, and that which is fit, proper, healthful, of use or benefit. The subject considered in reference to which, what is fit, proper, or of benefit, is a positive or certain idea ; and that which is fit, proper, or of benefit for the subject considered, is the relative idea. It may here be proper to be observed, that every thing in regard to itself is good, and that in relation to it is accounted so, in reference to it. The consideration here is of the subject moral or man, and as there might be some question raised as to the assumption of the positive idea of such good, it may be proper to refer to the moral estimation itself. Of this there can be no question, that in reference to the moral good, man is the subject ; for every thing referred to as good morally, bears reference, whether or not it is of good as relating to, or in reference to man. And man, the subject moral, and to which his own attention is directed as being considered, must of necessity be good as to itself ; and this needs must

be the case, because to be reasonable or consistent with itself, man must esteem or consider himself as a being good, otherwise he would not be reasonable, but unreasonable, inconsistent, and irrational.

The subject, therefore, moral, of man, for man to be consistent and reasonable is good in the human estimation, or moral consideration ; and this necessarily must be the case, is universally witnessed, as mankind universally in a sane and healthful state are directed to what is good in reference to what is so to man, the chief subject of the creature's consideration in itself. This fact is universal, except under perversion or abuse of itself or its power, which we shall consider in its proper place in the practical consideration of this law, and under delusion, or in an insane state of the creature, and error, or mistaken ideas and notions imbibed ; but of which, considering the moral or reasonable nature of man, we here take no account, except incidentally necessary to mention in reference, to explain any idea or meaning, point or position stated.

The subject referred to in moral consideration of man as that esteemed good, is a positive or certain idea, and which serves man as a standard by which all that he accounts good or bad, refers, as being in accord with, or the contrary ; and by which standard all mankind are found to be regulated, or governed by practically ; in that all generally agree in their estimations of what is good by its accordance with the subject, or not being so, is not esteemed, but accounted bad or wrong.

Of what is
meant by posi-
tive and rela-
tive good.

We have, therefore, to notice here two subjects of good referred to in the mind's direction ; the one positive in what he accounts good in itself, as the moral subject, man ; and the other that in the relative sense of what is of good to the positive, or the subject considered ; and which latter is the matter or subject relative, as good, generally occupying our attention to judge of and estimate, as the matter or subject of practice, and of our practical consideration ; as what is fit, or proper, wholesome, of use, or benefit, effective of good, and preventive of hurt or injury in relation to man, the subject moral considered good. The subjects relative generally falling under consideration of what is good, in reference to that which we usually so call or denominate, or apply the term good.

The moral
good superior
in estimation
by man.

Let us exemplify the superiority of this law of his direction in regard to himself, the moral subject, and apply this power or means of man of his mind in the consideration of any other subject not moral, as a horse, an ox, a tree, or plant ; and as a reasonable being in regard to such other subject, his direction by this law is in that fit, or proper, or accordant for it, the subject considered, and as to such is good, and therefore consistent for it, is reasonable, as to that subject considered ; and his direction, therefore, in his reason, is to good as to such subject. And similar is the action of the mind, as has been noticed in regard to man. But as he applies this

power of his moral direction morally, or to man, he, the being possessing the power, is directed by it to good as to himself; and all other things are made subservient to his estimation of good as to man; and as compared with, or contrasted with him, their good is only of value as they may be of good to him, or concern him; and are only regarded by him for the purposes or object of his own or moral good.

Certainty of the moral law Thus we have seen this law of the moral nature of man in his reason is a noticed.

law directing him to good, is as evident in truth to mental conception and cognizance, as things certain and evident to us in substantial matter, and in effect are; as evident and certain to our senses, as that the sun illumines the earth at midday, or as a stone projected falls to the earth by its gravity.

There can be no longer, therefore, any doubt or question that men brought to the consideration of the power and means of their direction by the mind, that in it, by the power characterizing it of reason, they possess a law, positive and fixed, in their moral nature, for their direction to good; and that it is a truth existing and apparent to them thus brought to consider the subject, as that they themselves exist, and that they possess that power within them of mind distinguishing them, and which marks and distinguishes them from all other created beings of this earth they inhabit, and by which all their acts and proceedings are distinguished, and distinguishable from all such other beings.

The truth and certainty of the law for the direction of man to good, thus viewing man, and the power and means of his direction in his mind, is therefore made apparent and established to him.

It is in this law of our peculiar nature operating in man, that, I think we may unquestionably say, directs him to that general knowledge of good we see universally pervades all mankind, and which they attain a knowledge of practically, and which we here are giving the science of in his moral nature, and shewing what it is, as the rule or law of his peculiar or moral nature which directs him.

There are many co-operating causes that divert and prevent men following and observing the practical knowledge of good as well as they ought, or can; but with practical knowledge only of it, and their instruction being only founded in such practical acquirement of knowledge, and the rules of practice, however well and ably explained, as no question they are, yet they will still want the force which the certainty the laws seen in the science of the subject affords; and the assurance that gives of their correctness, and the control which reason has over men, where they know, and can see what is their direction in the subject upon which their attention is engaged.

Practical knowledge only, moreover, being that which men obtain of morals and moral control, without the aid of science, the subject will be precisely on a level with their practical acquirements. If such has been little, or corrupted by errors or pre-

judices, bad modes and habits, so will morals be found, and there will be no advance in improvement, but under accidental causes, as we see unedified nations and illiterate people continuing in their errors and prejudices, and habits and modes often prejudicial and hurtful, and if alteration takes place from accidental causes, these may either produce a worse course or better, precisely as such circumstances tend; but science is to render this knowledge of the subject certain; and science opened to man of his own nature, his improvement is carried on with surer steps, and to indefinite extent.

It is different with the knowledge of the subject practically obtained, and obtained in science, which shewing the truths, and in morals, the truth of the laws of human direction. Men will then be better able to see what is in accord with their subject by the laws they have to direct them in it, and their modes and habits which may be wrong or in error, may be corrected and rendered more conformable to their real good and welfare, and they will have the force of reason as their authority for its adoption, and to promote its attainment.

As reasonable beings they can only find sanction and justification in according with the reasonable direction, and can only claim regard and respect of themselves as men and moral beings, by those rules, and modes, and conduct, which are in accordance with the privilege and pre-eminence of their own nature above the rest of the created beings on this earth they dwell on.

The subject
only required
to be con-
sidered to see
the law.

In this, we trust, plain exposition, we see the law of the moral nature of man in reason, or the reasonable nature of man, directing him to good, and his authority and justification for good in the powers and means he is blessed with for his direction; and that it only requires investigation or inquiry, and consideration of the moral nature, to see and learn its law and the authority of man in that, and to point this out for the instruction of all.

Reference to
exemplifying
to shew, by way of exemplifying this
the law.

I will offer a few more observations exemplifying to shew, by way of exemplifying this law of his direction, and shewing that man is directed by it, and by his approving what is right, or proper, or good, adopts that; yet apparently not aware that this law so directing him is a positive and fixed law of his moral nature; and we may infer that it is only the want of seeing, or not seeing better, the truth and certainty of the law they have for their direction in their moral nature, that such law has not had better effect, or been regarded more by men morally, or as concerns man himself.

I shall now proceed to exemplify the direction of man by the law of his moral nature, in his mind and reason, to what is good, or fit, proper, of use, benefit, or in agreement with the subject considered, or consistent, and therefore reasonable; and that in such direction is his authority, his sanction, and justification in what he does, or is proceeding from, or in any way resting with, or dependent on him. In

shewing this we will refer to what men approve, as in what they approve, directed by the same law, it is in what is fit, proper, or in agreement with the subject considered, and consistent with it is therefore reasonable ; and in what they approve, or the approbation, shewing their assent or agreement to that direction, and their authority in it, and their acting in conformity with it.

Exemplification of the law. The mind employed in the inquiry of the physical nature of man, approves

what he discovers, and what he finds is good or serviceable in medicine, art or skill in surgery, wholesome food, habits, air, water, and other things ; or as applied to other things, as making inquiry on agriculture, the management of cattle, or as to trade, or manufactures, or works of art, he approves what it discerns or considers to be the better mode for his practice or adoption in regard to such. In the great art of navigation he approves and adopts what he discovers beneficial or serviceable. So, in any other art or pursuit, he approves what he finds serviceable or beneficial ; thus, in the manufacturing or procuring iron or other useful metals. Does he discover a better mode of smelting or procuring iron from the ore, he approves of it, and he adopts the discovery.

The mind is here, in these instances, applied to the inquiry upon the subject, and what it sees, accords with, is right or best as it can see ; the mind it is that approves and adopts, sanctioned in its approval. So that we see the mind applied to the in-

quiry into, or investigation of these, or indeed any other subject, and for obtaining knowledge of them, and for his direction in them, approves what is seen or considered to be fit, proper, or right, or the better or more correct as to the subject, and that which he can see or find out to be the most correct or proper for the subject, adopts it, and does not reject it. He does so as consistent for the object, and what is so is reasonable ; and he is directed by his reason, applied to the subject, reason being only known and recognized in the subject considered, by what is agreeable to it, fit, or proper, and so consistent for it, or desirable, as to the subject considered, such is reasonable ; and in his approval, therefore, he is directed by the law of his nature directing him to what is good, because consistent for the subject considered, and therefore reasonable, and therefore his sanction and authority for it, as a reasonable being, and directed by what is so, by the discernment of it in his moral means of his mind, and his faculties in it of reason.

Applying the mind, therefore, to himself, man, in reason he can only approve what is right or proper for man, or what is good or beneficial ; and so likewise for the purposes of his action or direction, consonant to reason he can only approve to do what is beneficial or good for man ; as the subject of his consideration, as consistent with or for man, and therefore what is reasonable.

It is upon this view of the power that man has

to direct him in his mind, applied to the consideration of man, that it approves what is right or proper, good or wholesome, as to man, and to do that which is according to the discernment of that means possessed by him of his mind, what is agreeable, consistent, or proper for the subject, that is his authority ; and his acts, accordingly, are consistent with or agreeable to reason.

The direction of man to good by this law, and his authority in it, seen in the approval of good, is thus verified by these facts or instances of the action of the mind as to the objects or subjects to which it is applied to consider, and applied to man, is verified morally, or as to himself, in directing him to his good, or what is proper, wholesome, or consistent for him, and therefore reasonable.

Yet men have not seen this law directing them, to be a positive and fixed law of his moral means or nature, because his moral means, fallible, fail him, in errors, mistakes, and in ignorance, to see the good ; fail to govern and control him in it when he does see it, and fail to see its own power and capacities through such failing, and not letting him see that reason alone, (separate from these causes, that blind, mislead, and pervert him and his powers,) is a law directing him by what is reasonable, in what is fit, proper, or of benefit ; and as such is good for the subject considered, and morally, of man, and as such a positive and fixed law of his moral or reasonable nature directing to good, and

which he only sees, or learns by labour, in inquiry, research, and examination. But the dark vice of ignorance arising in his own fallible nature preventing his seeing the law moving and directing him in his own moral nature, in reason, we may hope to dispel by the aid of science.

Qualification,
in what sense
reason is re-
ferred to as
the law direct-
ing man.

Before proceeding further, I will here advert to the sense or meaning in which we refer to reason as a law directing to good, to have a correct idea and understanding of such use of that term *as a law*, and to prevent any mistake or confusion in those cases where the mental powers are not used for the purposes of good, but the contrary, evil.

In referring to reason as a law directing to good, it is meant in its application considerate of a subject, as we may instance to any animate creature, as a horse, or to any inanimate thing, as a tree, what is fit, or proper, or wholesome for these, as food, protection from inclement weather, fair use, and not abusing the animal, is good for the horse; wholesome and nutritious soil, moisture, the protection, not injuring in cutting, breaking, burning, or wounding the trunk or limbs, is good for the tree; and morally, as applied to the subject moral, what is fit, proper, wholesome, or of benefit, is good for man. Such are consistent, and such are reasonable, and in this sense reason is applied considerate of the subject, and directs to good, and cannot direct otherwise reasonably, for what is contrary to

this is not reasonable; so that we mean by this law directing men to good, is in its application considerate of the subject.

The general agency or executive power of reason noticed. But the mind, and reason in it, is a general power of agency in man, and is directing him in every thing he does, alike in good as in evil; and in this sense we view it in its executive capacity, of applying to every thing, or any thing, man is capable of using or applying his mind. Referring to it, applying it, or viewing it in this sense, reason is not confined to the consideration of any particular subject, or the subject moral, or man, but to any thing or matter whatever; and here, inconsiderate of any specific subject, and inconsiderate of that subject moral, or man, it may not be applied or used to what is only consistent with man and good, but to what is contrary, and we deem immoral, inconsistent, irrational, as to the subject moral, and is evil.

Distinction of applying reason, considerate of any given subject, or in its executive capacity as a general agent. It is necessary, therefore, to consider and point out this distinction of the moral means, and that by reason, used in the sense of a law directing man to good, we mean, the mind or reason is applied considerate of the subject, and so applied, directs to good, that being what is fit, proper, or of benefit, and consistent, and therefore reasonable; and the moral means or reason used as a general agent, in which its executive capacity only is adverted to, and no reference is

made to its considerate application to any subject, or applied considerately for any specific subject, as the moral subject, or man, considerately of man, and what is reasonable, morally, for man, or appropriately in a moral sense.

It is highly necessary, therefore, to consider this distinction, to avoid confusion or mistake between the moral means applied considerately of any given subject, and of the moral subject, man, and applied generally as an agent or as an executive means to any subject indifferently, and in which it may direct to all subjects and matters alike, and be aiding in what is good for a subject, or what is the contrary.

But we are here considering the subject moral. It is to man we apply or use the term reason, when we say it is a law directing man to good, and this is the application of the moral means or power to the subject moral, and is a law directing to good, or the good of the subject it is applied, considerate of such; but in its general agency, or its mere executive capacity, it may be directing to his good, or the contrary; and when it directs the contrary, it is inconsiderate of man, but may be considerate of the subject contrary to, or opposed to the moral subject, or man, and in what is injurious and hurtful. And although man, in so acting, is directed by his moral means, it is not morally applied, that is, considerate of man, but of what is wrong, injurious, and hurtful.

It is not in this case a moral agent for a moral object or purpose; but the moral power is here used in its mere executive capacity of aid and assistance in its direction to such foreign or opposed subject. It is then an immoral agent, inconsistent, and unreasonable in reference to what is moral; and is an immoral agent to an immoral purpose when so perverted and abused.

The intellectual faculties, like the corporeal matter and power, contain in its physical nature capacities for good and its well-being, as also for its prejudice, and hurt, and destruction; but the intellectual nature has the capacity of inquiring into, seeing what is its good, and consciousness of what is so, and its direction by its consciousness of what is good; and to act by this, is the reasonable action of man, is moral, and is the peculiar nature of a moral and reasonable being; and with the power it is the design of his nature and constitution as a moral and reasonable being; but a man may act inconsistently, and so far unreasonably as to any matter or subject; but then he has no sanction or authority for this, or justification in what he does unreasonably, or inconsistent with the subject as to that subject as a reasonable being, and which is his distinction as such.

The distinction briefly noticed.

The distinction of the cases of the use or application of reason is very plain, that in the one it is used inconsiderately of a given subject, the moral subject, for instance, or man; but is applied to another subject

that bears relation to, or affects man prejudicially, is wrong, vicious, or injurious. And in the other case it is applied considerately of a subject, and morally of man; and in which case, considerate of its subject, and morally of man, it can only direct consistently, or according to reason for that subject, what is right, proper, fit, or good, and otherwise is said not to be reasonable, but unreasonable, as inconsistent, wrong, or improper; and as to man, immoral.

Reason is a law, when examined, of his direction to good; but we do not say it is a means of control beyond other causes influencing man; but it is nevertheless the means of control of the reasonable man, governing and controlling himself by its direction, law, or rule, to good.

And therefore, although a man is directed by his mind and reason, when he opposes or acts contrary to what is good, he has no sanction or authority for that in reason, neither can he in reason approve of that; and this law of his moral nature still remains a law or rule for his direction to good; and notwithstanding his acts and propensities to the contrary; and he knows, by his reason, and in what is consistent, what is good, as that is, which he can in reason only approve; and that, directed in accordance with reason, his direction is to that which is good.

He, moreover, has no sanction or authority in doing that which is wrong, although directed by reason in doing or compassing the act of wrong;

and this is shewn by his not approving such act, because that is not in accord, or agreement with the moral object or subject, and he cannot approve such act, because unreasonable, or inconsistent for the subject moral ; and he can only approve what is reasonable and is consistent.

In pointing out this law of the human direction to good, it is not, therefore, meant to be said, that the mind, as the power or means of human direction, cannot, and will not direct him in opposition to what is good, and in contravention of what he can approve, or is fit, or right direction ; for this would be contrary to fact, in all that men do in opposition to that which they can only approve ; and which is the constant effect with all who do wrong, wilfully, or knowing they do so.

But then we say, when the mind and reason in that directs him contrary to what is good, it does not direct accordant to reason for the subject affected, hurt, or injured ; and this being the subject moral, or man, not accordant to reason for man, the subject moral, and the subject of human consideration, and which we are here looking for, the law or rule of his direction, and for our better instruction, and our better and more appropriate action and control in regard to that subject. And that the subject for which reason is applied, considerate of it, can only in reason direct what is accordant with that, for the subject ; this is good, this is consistent, and this is reasonable ; and what is otherwise is unreasonable, and he cannot approve this.

Of his consciousness of acting right or wrong.

Knowing what he does is in accord with the subject, or as to man what is so, or is moral, he is doing consciously what is right, and is acting conscientiously; and when knowing what he does is not in accord with the subject, or as to man what is not so, or is immoral, he is doing with knowledge what is wrong, and his acting so is wilful.

Election offered of good and evil.

And as far as the man, or the mind, or the directing agent of the being is concerned, it offers an election or option between good and evil. His reason offers the means of his deciding his election with consciousness of the one mode and the other, the right and the wrong, or the good and the evil; and standing on the character of his distinctive property, his election by the law of his direction will be that which is in accordance with reason, or his direction by this to good, for reasonably he can reconcile that only which is accordant to reason.

Consciousness makes man a responsible agent.

This, moreover, makes him a responsible agent, with consciousness of the good, or the contrary, and of his direction in accordance with the power distinguishing him; for he knows which he should adopt or elect, consistent with the power rendering him so pre-eminent, with which he is peculiarly blessed above other beings, and the means of his direction; and by the same power he knows or sees it is the reasonable design of those means or powers, and of the Omnipotent Creator endowing his crea-

ture man with them, as far as he is able to see or judge through the same agency or means with which he is so beneficently and superiorly blessed and distinguished.

Preference of good decided by the law of reason directing man. For the preference, therefore, of the good, consistent with and directed by reason, and the rejection of the evil as inconsistent and opposed to reason, as a moral agent, man is evidently required to have such preference, in conformity with his moral nature, and the design in that, and which he is responsible for, consistent with his means and character, and claiming or having any pretensions to humanity, and to be respected or regarded in such character.

Explanation on the proper use of terms. It has been shewn that man has a fixed and positive law for his direction to good, and when directed by it he acts reasonably, because that is consistent; for in that which is of use, or service, or benefit for man, and good; and therefore he is said to act reasonably, and acting contrary, he acts unreasonably.

Qualification of the term "unreasonable." It is proper to notice, that when we say a man acts unreasonably, it is meant that he acts so consciously, or with knowledge, and therefore wilfully, and is responsible for his wrong act. But it is not meant, when we say a man acts unreasonably, that he acts without mind or reason; it is only meant, he acts not in accordance with reason concerning man, considerably of him, or morally; and as reason applied to man, points out, being right or proper, as good for man, is

consistent, and therefore reasonable ; and he can approve and shew that he has sanction in that, by his assent or favourable judgment, as reasonable.

The term "unreasonable" is applied to signify inconsistent with or contrary to reason, for what is good, and right, or proper, morally, or for man ; but it does not mean he acts without mind or reason as to the act done ; for as a human being directed by mind and reason in that, he is directed and governed by that : this is the application of his reason in its executive capacity, only as an aid or means ; but not in such case as applied for the object moral, or man, but he is directed by his mind or reason in the act done which is bad, and not in accord or agreement for man, his benefit, or good, and contrary to that which in reason, applied to man, is consistent, and therefore reasonable, and which he can only morally approve.

And this is the distinction between what a man may do irrationally, or without mind and reason, or under insanity of mind, and what he does unreasonably, as contrary to reason, knowing the act is so and is wrong, inconsistent with, or not in accord with the subject considered, and morally, not in accord considerately for man, and is done with sanity of mind, but for which he has some influencing motive or cause, opposing his right or reasonable course considerate of man.

In the one case, not knowing what he does, or effectively so, or insanely, or without sanity of mind, he is not held responsible, whatever opposition or

restraint may be necessary to counteract him, or prevent evil or mischief; but in the other case, knowing what he does is unreasonable, or not in accord with the subject moral, or considerately for man, being of sane mind, he is held to be responsible or accountable.

A man may also act unconsciously of wrong in error, and directed by his mind and reason, but acting in mistake, or in ignorance, he is innocent of intentional wrong morally, or as it may concern man.

Meaning of terms used exemplified. It may be useful to instance the ways in which a man may act unreasonably, or contrary to reason, as here spoken of, or alluded to. A man may elect a course of life that is unwholesome, or prejudicial to his health, or life; this only affects his own person. He may indulge in palatable viands, that are not healthy; he may give way to gluttony and inebriety, and employ and use his mind in the ways or means of accomplishing such acts; he acts, therefore, with mind and reason, but not consistently for the object of moral consideration, or considerately of man. A man may, to gratify his anger, jealousy, temper, vindictiveness, or revenge, do that which will injure, or perhaps destroy and kill the object of his malign temper or will, and will use his mind and reason in accomplishing that, by directing him what to do in order to effect this; but in this, however reason is employed in its executive capacity, it is used only to effect or circumvent his act, and is not reason-

able, as consistent with, or considerate of man; hence, as reason is applied to man, and what he can morally, or reasonably approve, as consistent for man, such act is contrary to it, and therefore termed unreasonable.

Meaning of the term "right reason." These cases fall under what is termed by some writers right reason, and wrong "right reason." The reason is used as a general agent, but not applied rightly, but wrongly, knowingly so, for a subject that, in reason to be consistent for such subject, is what is reasonable, and may be called "right reason;" the contrary of this, or reason applied to circumvent the hurt or injury of that subject, to be considered or regarded, and our acts to effect such hurt, or injury, or wrong, are appropriate and fit for mischief, are so far reasonable, may be termed wrong reason.

Distinction of insanity, in reference to the terms used, of reason, and that contrary to reason, or unreasonableness.

A man insane does not know the effect or consequence of his act, or is under a delusion preventing the due application of reason of what is truly consistent, or wholesome, and right, and proper, and hence has not a wholesome or sane control or government of himself as a reasonable being. A man may be insensible to the danger of fire, or water, or any other, to a sane mind, obviously dangerous matter, or he may, in delusion of mind, suppose such right or proper. He may imagine he can swim, touch fire with safety, or innocuously take poison.

He may, on some imaginary cause, consider he

is warranted in destroying another, or doing some great mischief or folly ; this is the delusion in reasoning itself, the most unhappy and most dangerous, but not the least common of all insaneness. But not in a wholesome, or sound state of mind, he is not, strictly speaking, conscious of the wrong, or unreasonableness of his actions, in its inconsistency, and therefore is not held to be responsible for his actions, however foolish, bad, or enormous, the mischief, folly, or act of delusion committed.

Distinction of cases of error, The case of error or mistake may arise from ignorance, or want of knowing being sane in mind, and act- ledge, or misjudging any point or case. ing by reason.

A man may not see that the board or ground he would trust to support him is unsound, or hollow, and will give way with him. In argument he may not see clear the points or bearings of his case, or the reasoning on it, and the right inference to be drawn or deduced. A man may misjudge the intentions of another ; circumstances may appear or augur unfavourably, and he may not have opportunity of inquiring into the particulars of the case he is considering, and not seeing what is right, through his mistake, he may commit a wrong act, and to the damage and hurt of himself, or to the injury or prejudice of another. Under errors or mistakes a man acts not without mind, or reason, for he judges well or rightly, as far as he knows, or thinks he does so, and means to act accordingly right or properly, and believes that he does at the time ; but for want of knowledge, or his mistakes,

or misjudging, his act is wrong, and may be hurtful ; yet, in the intention of doing right, he is innocent of wrong, as to crime, or moral turpitude, or impropriety.

It may not be improper also to notice Of the proper use of the term that the term "approval" is sometimes "approve," or applied, morally meaning, to the election of the wrong, or the bad, instead

of the right, or good. As a man is said to approve of evil, or be an approver of it when he promotes it, or adheres to it, as opposed to what is good ; but this, I submit, is an improper application or use of the term. So a man who may wish or desire what may be hurtful or injurious to himself, is sometimes said to approve what is bad, by acting according to his desires. But if he perceives the wrong or injurious consequences, or bad act or course of his conduct, as a reasonable or moral being he cannot approve it, and thus persisting in his course, he is acting contrary to what he can only approve. A man may not see when he is acting injuriously, or wrongly, himself, but then he is mistaken ; he is certainly then not acting contrary to what he approves, but he approves in ignorance, or in misjudgment, what is wrong, and acts according to what he approves, supposing it is right ; but which, in fact, he is mistaken in, and wrong, or in error.

But where this is the case, his mistake proves his direction to good by the approving an act or thing, by his believing it to be good, and acting, or

persisting to act in that way which he mistakenly considers to be right and proper.

This latter is so common a case, that I trust I may be excused for not exemplifying it, or noticing it further.

But to come back to what is said to be an approval of the bad : that such is a wrong application of the term "approval," there can be no doubt, because it is shewn to be impossible for a man to approve reasonably, in relation to any subject, matter or thing in respect of such, that which is bad or wrong for it ; because such is inconsistent, and reason is only known by its consistency. So morally, or in respect of man, he cannot approve that which is injurious or hurtful to man. Such holding to, or doing wrong, may be a preference, or is an election or option of the bad, but properly speaking, cannot, or ought not, in strictness, to be termed an approval of it.

I merely mention this misuse of the term "approval," by the way, as a caution against the mistakes we are apt to fall into by a misuse of terms, in the confusion it often occasions in our views or consideration of any subject ; and so the wrong application of the term "approval" to what is bad or wrong, may mislead us in considering the subject of morals, and the law and direction man has to good by what he morally approves.

CAUSES OPPOSING THE LAW.

Notice of occasions opposing the law of the moral direction. I HAVE hitherto been shewing or pointing out the power or nature in man, as he is morally constituted, of his direction to good, and that by a law or power of the constitution of his peculiar nature, namely, his moral or reasonable character, and his moral means ; and that only requires to be carefully inquired into, and examined, to be seen ; and once seen and pointed out, cannot fail of being recognized, and we hope can never be lost sight of, or man any longer left in ignorance upon so important a matter as the law or rule for his direction and his welfare.

I now propose to consider the causes or occasions interfering with, or opposing his following or observing this direction man has to good in the law of that moral nature, and influencing or inducing him not to practise the good to which this law directs him.

That such causes exist to oppose or stand in the way of that direction, as to the practice or observance of it, is most certain ; and that they exist in the same nature of the being, namely, his mind and power of direction man has in that of reason, operated upon by passions, desires, inclinations, interests, errors, and mistakes ; which nature, neverthe-

less, only required to be searched into, and examined, as to the powers and means he possesses for his direction, to see the correction of these opposite causes, which he has in the same power, by directing him to the good simply by this law of his moral nature, in a reasonable being, directing him to what is reasonable, and to the election of that, as a reasonable being.

Chief cause
in the law it-
self, applied
individually,
but its cor-
rection when
duly con-
sidered.

In proceeding to the consideration of the causes which interfere with, or oppose the observing the direction of this law, it may be proper to call the attention first to the fact, that men in themselves as individuals, are generally well inclined to their own good, and that the disregard of the direction to good is more as it concerns others; and that it is in their conduct as concerns others, and their actions towards them, that the greatest or more frequent deviation from the direction occurs, and is witnessed.

It is in the inclination and disposition that men have as individuals to their own good, and so far practically regard the direction of the law, that is the great occasion of their disregard of others, or not observing the direction the moral means affords towards them.

It will be evident to every one by the knowledge possessed of themselves, that generally and individually, all mankind are well disposed to the direction of that means possessed within themselves, of their mind, to their own good, (except under error or

mistake,) for there can be no question, when we come to consider what the direction is, that it is the good of man, and that good sanctioned only by what he can approve in that being consistent or reasonable, and which, as to himself, unless perverse in nature, insane, or idiotic, he must be well disposed to, being congenial to his common nature, or animal feelings. Sanctioned, therefore, by the pre-eminent authority of his reason, and approving what is good, because reasonable, the inclination of man to his own good must be of the strongest force, and he must have the strongest inducement to regard it. Such causes, both of a moral character, and of a common natural character, as to his feelings and sensibilities, combining, must produce the more generally powerful and prevalent disposition in man to his good, than the contrary, or to evil, his hurt and pain. The fact is evidenced in all human proceedings, and our knowledge of them in ourselves, that men, individually, are well inclined to good as a general rule.

The fact is, that man, with few exceptions, is inclined to his good, and both individually and in partisanship, or in favoritism, he is too prone to consider his own good, and his own cause, in prejudice to others, whose interests may be involved with, or bear in some way or other, relation to his own, but opposite to them.

In illustration, may we not put this question to ourselves? Are we not all well disposed to what we approve, as to ourselves individually? and do or

can we approve in reason of any thing in such reference, but the good of ourselves? And our answer, of necessity, in reason, is evidence affirmative of the fact.

The disposition of men towards their own good, without due regard or consideration of others, is that we exclaim against and condemn as selfishness. The disposition of men towards their own good, with due consideration of others, is moral and just.

The disposition in men towards their own good is one of the most potent and general sources of influence prevailing, that misdirects us in regard to the direction, by his moral means and law in that, towards others, until reflecting and considering, and the attention is called to the regard due to others.

This disposition of man towards his own good, in the individual, is certainly the most common source of the disregard of the direction of the moral law towards others; and is probably the most frequent, if not the constant exciting cause of other causes which oppose that direction; as in the passions, anger, vindictiveness, malice, revenge, deceitfulness, lying, and dishonesty, and other bad feelings and emotions of nature, which are opposed to, and prevent the due regard and observance of the direction of this law, and in that, what only we can approve.

Absorbed in their own feelings and interests, and desires for their own good, men either have not con-

sidered the good of others, or the regard due to others, or they do not see, or they forget, or they overlook in their own views, ideas, and considerations of their own claims or rights, or sanction in reason for their own good, the similar existing claim of all men; neither do they scan or weigh that respect or consideration which is due to them, and which should be observed by one towards another, and guide or govern themselves by those rules which are considerate of others; and this is a point the consideration of rights instructs us in.

With this strong inducement in man for the direction of the law of his moral nature, as regards himself, he is misled from a regard of, or forgets the regard of the direction as concerns others. But on examining the direction which he has by this law; and in calling the attention to the study of the moral means or power which he has for his direction, the correction of this overweening influence in the individuals of their own good is pointed out by this law of his moral means in reason, when duly examined and considered; and which it is the business of the consideration of the subject, and the object of the present work, in this consideration, to call to the attention.

The law of the moral nature of man being the same, and existing the same in all, is the same authority and sanction to the one man exactly as it is to another. And the same power in mind and reason which gives or sanctions the good, and is in

conformity so far with his general disposition in the one man, is the same exactly in another. And in the study of the subject of the moral government which I am here considering, I have to call the attention to this fact, that this law, which is the sanction and authority to one man for his good, and is his sanction, and on which he asserts his claim to good, and are his rights in this respect, founded in the moral law, or the law of his peculiar nature, exists in all men ; and is the same authority, the same sanction, and in such authority and sanction, are the same rights, morally, in all men.

The direction, therefore, that we find in this inquiry and examination, and the discussion of the moral means or power of man, is, that in this law all men having equal and the same rights to their good, they are all equally and alike entitled to consideration, and respect of the object of those rights, the good for which, by the law directing them in the good, they claim as their sanction and authority; and such is their claim, their title, and their justification.

At the same time this law gives to man his rights to good, it imposes the regard and consideration of that good, and to all men, to one exactly the same as another ; and man has in this law the direction to the consideration of the good of all men, one man as well as another : and this is the moral obligation or duty of man in the authority of this law of his direction. And without such authority, no man morally, or as to any power or authority of

man, or as man can see, or discern, or judge, or determine, in what is arising or proceeding from man, has any authority, any claim, any title, or justification, or any right for respect or consideration in any good whatsoever. And as to man, he would be without rule or law (whatever rule or force, legal or conventional institutions might avail) for his action, or the consideration of man by any internal monitor of his own. But he has this law. It is in his nature. That peculiar nature it has pleased his most beneficent Creator to implant in him, and characterize him with, as superior to all other created beings; and which nature it only wanted and required to consider, and study, and by so doing, to discern and point out the law and rule of his action.

Man, therefore, has in the moral law the correction of this vice of selfishness, or this want of consideration of others in their good, by the direction he has in this law. And in the study and consideration of the moral means or power man has for his direction, he sees the rule given him for the correction of the want of consideration of others. But of the equality of rights, and of their effect in producing the consideration of all men by one another for good, I shall have to speak more fully afterwards.

Occasion of failing of regard of the law, from error or fallibility of men.

Another source of man deviating from the direction of the law of his moral nature, not from indisposition to good, is in the want of sufficiency of

power or means of discernment, or want of power or ability to see or discriminate in all cases, what shall be in agreement with, or will effect the object of the direction we have in this law of good, or to see and judge what is practicable.

I may here observe, that the mind, however superior as a means distinguishing and directing man, and placing him in a station far above comparison with other beings not endued with mind and reason, and in its law giving him his direction to good ; that good is known and acknowledged mentally as his benefit, service, and what is in accord with, or wholesome for him, and not hurtful or destructive : but what things and acts shall be of good or service, or conduce to this, although the mind marks his superiority in discernment, and is his authority for adopting what will be of good, when and as he discerns, and it is within his means of compassing ; yet it is not always correct in judgment, or capable of seeing what will be of good ; this is want of knowledge, but it is not want of rule or law. What will be of good is involved with so many circumstances, and over which men may have no control, or sufficiently so, or no means of sufficiently inquiring into, or seeing the nature, the results, or the consequences, that with all the superiority of power and discernment which the mind gives man, he will not always be able to see or judge rightly or correctly. This is the fallibility of the mind. But this does not concern the law of his direction which he has in his mind by reason, or any way affect it,

except as to the means of observing it, or executing it, in not being able always to see in matters, or things, or acts of moral relation, what is in conformity with it; neither does this concern the intention or disposition, which, however well inclined or disposed a man may be, or well intended what he does, or would do, his mind and powers may fail him; and the fallibility here refers to his judgment in the relation of things and acts to man, and his good, whether such will be to his benefit or service, or to the contrary; and which, though better enabled to see and judge of by the superiority of discernment by his mind, he may yet not always be capable of seeing or discovering the best, or avoiding or foreseeing the danger and evil, or what is the worst, or what is the least injurious of the causes which oppose the direction of the law of his moral nature to good, in the want of sufficient discernment or ability to judge in all cases what is relatively good, or will conduce to, or effect our object in that respect; this is mere misjudgment, and implies no intentional or wilful opposition to the direction by this law, and in that, what we can approve, although very often it may render us responsible for what we may do. A man has a question as to the right mode of his proceeding as his acts may affect himself, or others; he takes the consequences of his own mistakes as affecting himself; but if they affect others, to their detriment or injury, he may in some cases be required to make reparation. A dispute or claim may arise between

men ; either party may not see which is right as to the matter disputed, and either acting on his supposed propriety, may do wrong to, or prejudice the other wrongfully in person, property, or justice. A man also may not always see what is wholesome or safe for himself to do, or that will involve himself or others in danger, or loss, and he may do that unintentionally which will bring destruction on himself or others. A man in such case is not held criminal for the injury done to others ; but as to their injury in person or property, he may be responsible to give compensation, or make good the damage.

The proceedings or actions of men under these circumstances shew no failing of the law ; for it is by the law they are acting, they see any failure of being in conformity with it, and shews no intention to do wrong, but is the failing of his judgment or perceptions in what is the correct, proper, or right, in relation to that good, the benefit of man, the direction to which this law gives him.

The most serious occasion opposing the law, in errors considered as truths, and believed as good.

The next source of misdirection of man opposed to his direction to good by the law of his moral nature that I shall consider, is of a more fearful character, namely, of errors, and under a belief of good in the ideas and opinions entertained, mistakes and perversions, and through prejudices, habits, manners ; and which, by education, under such erroneous ideas or notions, are promoted and cherished ; and wherein men consider they are justified in what they consider as good

under such blindness. For these, we can hope correction, in great measure, in having the attention of men called to the science or knowledge of their own nature, and the means of direction they have in that.

Of the source of misdirection under errors prejudicial to mankind, supposing, or imagining, or believing in their errors as not errors, but right, and proper, and good. Of such as are the result of mere ignorance, and habits, or customs, or prejudices, we may pass these without more comment, except referring to the hope expressed that they will correct themselves, or find correction in the enlightening of the mind by a sound education in moral science, and the plain facts and truth such will afford for their information, and especially in calling the attention of men to the consideration of the direction of man by the powers and means of his mind, and pointing out the course of direction he acquires in such means to good.

But there is in the education of man errors of ignorance, occasionally mixed up in the instruction given him, of the most pernicious character and effect with man; that it will be most useful to bring under consideration, and as contrasted with the plain truths of science, and its beneficial nature and effect in the rules of human direction, instead of the complicated and mysterious practice under error, and the mischievous, painful, and destructive effects of such, and the consequent abasement of man.

It is in the errors of ignorance that are believed as truths, cultivated in education, or transmitted on the relation of those of one generation to those of another, or by some called tradition, that we allude to, under which ideas and notions are entertained pernicious and opposed to the human good, and contrary to the law of his direction in his moral means or nature. Errors that are believed as truths, and held in veneration as duties imposed or enjoined on men to regard and observe, as pagan superstitions, and ignorance, and the instance of human sacrifice.

These become matters of faith that have the most injurious effects, and paralyze all efforts of man to overcome, by imagining any correction an opposition to the faith, and any deviation from which a sin of the most heinous deformity and offence to God.

This source of opposition to the direction of the moral means of man, necessarily involves the subject of religion ; but we are not discussing that subject here. I am here considering the moral nature, and the law or rule of that nature, or its mode of proceeding and acting in the human direction for his right and better conduct in all earthly concerns ; according to that constitution implanted in man, that the Supreme Being has blessed his creature with, different from other created living things and beings in the world, having existence in common with man ; and of which peculiar nature, in consequence of it, he feels and looks upon himself as a

distinct, and a peculiarly more favoured creature of his Maker on the earth, the world assigned to him for his dwelling place. The exercise of which powers and means it has been the will of God to endue man with, he must consider to be the intention in giving such to him, and that he is only performing that intention in making use of them according to his distinctive character of reason.

Although we are not discussing religion, we cannot deny or conceal, but that some errors and ignorances, such as human sacrifice, visitation of death on those differing in opinions, or the persecution of them; and unwholesome acts and ceremonies, voluntary and useless sacrifice of all healthful objects and purposes of life, are subjects of faith among some nations and people, and hence involve the consideration of religion, and which, as opposite to that direction, the moral nature of man points out, or directs on inquiring into and examining the laws and rules of its action, it would be an unworthy omission of duty to pass by without notice.

Where we can form any judgment for deciding what doctrines appear consistent, in the contemplation the human mind can have of the Creator, then those faiths which hold doctrine of a pernicious and destructive character to the creature, who can judge of the consistency of such doctrine, with the intent and design manifested by the Creator in the being so created, cannot be viewed as those which a rational being can accept; and we may ascribe without any offence to such men in their faith, that

such doctrines are the errors or mistakes of men, crept in under ignorance and errors, and other supposed but mistaken views of the object and design of man, as far as man is permitted to judge by the powers and means he is blessed with by his Creator; and that such errors or mistakes have become incorporated in their religion through the fallibility, the folly, or the weakness of man; and that the judgment which does guide and direct man, (but which, for want of being more exercised in its rational powers, often misleads him,) when inquired into and examined, will be found to have the means of its own correction, and of such errors and mistakes which mislead him.

Of such errors and ignorances, if there are any that mankind maintain on a blind faith, that admits of no exercise of judgment to decide his acceptance of, it is not with such we can contend, for in such case all contention of argument, or the use or discrimination of our intellect and judgment, will be of no avail; but where any opening offers for the light of truth and science to penetrate and enlighten the mind, so as to induce them to consider human philosophy, we may hope to dispel the errors and mistakes of men.

With such as will allow that the judgment is to decide on man's acceptance of his faith, then such errors and ignorances so pernicious to man, and so opposed to the direction of man by his moral means, we will hope will disappear in the contemplation of the law, which Providence has blessed his creature

man with in his peculiar or moral nature, and distinguishing him from all other created beings known.

We will hope this, because whatever may be the pertinacity, or blindness of zeal or faith which men possess, such must, whatever may be said to the contrary, in some degree rest with the believer : he must have some considerations and reflections of his mind upon the subject ; and in the use of his mind, and as he reflects upon that moral or peculiar nature implanted in man, and distinguishing him from all other creatures, it must be the intention of the Creator to distinguish him ; and for him to be the subject of those powers or means which so distinguish him, then it can only be by the acts of such distinguishing character ; and if so, then no one in their right senses can deny that the use of the powers and means of his mind, and of his reason, and of his judgment founded upon reason, as the distinguishing character, must be made use of for that distinction, and to direct those acts which mark the course of man and distinguish him from all other creatures ; and then omitting to pay respect to such power given him for his guidance and direction, is not fulfilling the object or design of his Creator, in his creation of man, evidenced by blessing him with his moral means, to the extent, or in the best way, such moral means enable him to see and discern, and is practicably within his power.

It is the law or rule of this peculiar and distinguishing nature I consider, and to display, and bring to the observation of men for their instruction. This, the direction of man by those powers or means which he is blessed with, must be the design of the Divinity blessing him with them, that they should be used. These are powers and means in the constitution of man with mind, and the study and the knowledge of these, of the mind in fact of itself, are a matter of science of that peculiar nature, and which can be inquired of, and judged of, and the law and the rule of their direction seen, and seen, adopted, without forming any matter of faith, or interfering with any matter of faith in the remotest degree; yet set men right, and correct their errors and ignorances of faith, grown up through human frailty, weakness and fallibility, in what can or cannot be acceptable in the human judgment, as far as man can see, with the Creator, who gave him the means of his direction in such moral nature. As such, the moral means are a law or rule for all men, whatsoever may be their faith, and separate and independent of it, and that can be considered and adopted without any interference or offence to it.

Such is my view, and such my hope; and I have therefore taken the pains to endeavour to point out this law or rule of action by science, in the hope of its benefit to man, and of its receiving, therefore, favour and adoption with men purely as science, but

not in any way interfering with the faith that any men may feel themselves constrained to follow or adopt.

As Christians we have nothing to observe, but that moral law and science is in unison and accord with the doctrines of our benignant and humane faith ; for which, nevertheless, it may be of use, as well as to correct, as to prevent the errors, the ignorances and the mistakes of men, rising up and misleading them ; as likewise to prevent men lapsing into errors and extravagancies of their own imaginations, unguided by the truths and facts arrived at and displayed by science.

Without the fixed laws or rules obtained in the science of the moral subject, by being inquired of and learnt by the investigation of facts, of the subjects that present themselves on inquiry ; and seen, are made known to keep men in a right course of proceeding through knowledge of it ; in morals like other subjects on which men may be ignorant of the science, they may fall into errors or conceits of the mind's imagination, for want of fixed and positive laws or rules of direction in our nature, being seen and made apparent ; and which is necessary to be known, properly to appreciate, and respect, and to guide, keep and preserve us within reasonable limits, and prevent men falling into errors even on religion, and that, that subject itself may not be perverted or misused.

The result we arrive at in human philosophy in the study, the inquiry, and examination of the

means and powers which man has for his direction in his mind, and the law of his direction arrived at ; and the sequel to this, of the practical consideration of this direction, are in strict accordance with Christianity. We can study, therefore, the moral nature, and the law or rule of that nature, or its mode of proceeding and action in the human direction, in perfect consistence and harmony with the Christian religion, the same as we can study any other subject of art, or science, or natural philosophy, of which, in fact, it is but a branch, namely, that relative to or concerning man, as to the powers and means of his direction, and the laws or rules he can see or discern in him for that. And I would say that the study of the human philosophy is necessary, as far as man is concerned, for the preservation of Christianity in its purity, and to keep and preserve in a correct course the mind of man, and to prevent the errors and misconceptions of the imagination, which may otherwise creep in and occasion delusion in, and the perversion of men's minds from the pure and true objects and course of men's mundane proceedings, consistent with that religion, which, however pure and simple in itself and its doctrines, we find in the page of history can be, and has been distorted into the most outrageous proceedings against humanity, while professing that as the pure and only object for men to concern themselves with on this earth. And such errors, and mistakes, and perversions, may occur again. At all times are men, from interests, errors, and the

fallibility of their nature, liable to fall into the same or similar mistakes and perversions.

Science required to correct errors of men in faith. The plain course to be taken to prevent this, at least as man can see, is the same in morals as in other subjects, by the ascertainment of truths and facts regarding the subject, that science affords in the study of any subject, and attaining the knowledge of truths and facts concerning it. And by inquiry and study of the moral nature in the moral powers or means of man for his direction, ascertaining the truth as to the laws or rules of the moral powers or means for the moral direction ; and proceeding by principles of science in morals, appears to human comprehension in reason, the only mode of preserving us certainly from error, and keeping men in the right path in their proceedings morally, as in all other subjects.

When we have done this, we have done all that science affords to preserve the law of humanity pure and free of perversions, and contamination of errors, and the baser interests of mankind. And we can only most fervently hope that by the lights of reason men have arrived at, and the moral science being better known, a relapse into those frightful and abominable horrors and enormities, that man in his ignorance is found almost everywhere to impose on himself, and to which even Christianity itself has been perverted, may never again afflict mankind.

But for the accomplishment of this, the science of human nature in regard to the conduct, and the

laws and rules of this, fixed on the immutable basis of truth, is essentially requisite, as much as in any other science, to act correctly in it as in any other subject. And we must study it as we would any other, to preserve the knowledge, and to make men acquainted with the laws of their direction, to pursue a right course as they would in any other science and business, or matter of practice.

Human philosophy, I contend, may not only be studied without prejudice, but in aid of the practice enjoined by Christianity, but in all other faiths and persuasions, and with like good service and effect. When we look up to the Omnipotent Great God of all in nature, whose laws implanted in nature, we have only to search and see, to follow and observe, and which can only be observed by men correctly through inquiry, and discerning that particular nature in the moral character, the Almighty has bestowed on man his creature, the truths in fact in this nature. To disobey this law of nature in man distinguishing the moral character, is a dereliction of the duty of the creature in the choice and election he has in it, of right or wrong; and not to use the powers he has to make the inquiry, and when so making it, discerning what he can, and does discover, not to follow, obey, and preserve that which he sees is the law, is a dereliction of duty as well in one faith as in another, to the One Great and Universal God of all.

The law of the moral nature of man, therefore, may be affirmed, is as much a matter of concern and

duty in one faith as it is in another ; even as much in all as it may be in Christianity, as more especially in accordance with it ; as much a matter and duty of the creature to inquire of, and study, and seen to observe, by one faith as another, and of as much moment, as that the Great and Universal God concerns all alike, and cannot be supposed would give a law or rule which distinguishes his creature man from the rest of created beings, that was not to be regarded, or is to be set aside, or perverted, by the foolishness, or ignorance, or the wickedness, or the designs of men.

And if, as is certain to all human apprehension, he has by this law of his moral nature of the human mind his direction to good, man has in this his moral nature of reason, his certain law for direction to good, which is as evident and certain as any fact he can be cognizant of, as that of his own existence, that the Great Author of nature would not contradict his mandate in that law, by requiring man under his faith to oppose that law, and say he was not to follow or observe that direction, or not do good.

This would be a fallacy or mistake, evidently, of man, and which the inquiry into, and science of his nature would set him right in, and preserve him in the course of his right direction, and his failing to follow or fulfil that would not be in his obedience to his faith, but the act either of his wickedness, his error, or his folly, or in his ignorance.

Notice of the great object of "unity of purpose."

One great object here presents itself, of more importance to man, can it be realized, than any other consideration, that is, unity of purpose in all mankind, and the principles upon which that is, and can only be recognized and pursued by man, namely, in the *means common to all mankind*,* in the moral nature of man, and which is by the powers distinguishing him from the rest of creation, and he is blessed with for his direction, of mind and reason. And this unity of purpose offers itself in good, according with humanity; and the best prospect of achieving this is by the truths of science, and through the knowledge obtained by that of the rules or laws of his direction in his own moral nature, exhibited to him, which direct him to good.

If unity of purpose is to be obtained, we might hope for the greater civilization of man, and that universally. And certain must it be to all considerate men, that this can only be obtained by science, by one universal law as applicable to all men, to guide, govern and direct all human objects and proceedings. And this, as just observed, can only be found in the nature of man, in what is alike common to all, and this is in his moral nature. And if this law can be established, can be seen, and is correct and true, such means hold forth the hope, at least, of some approximation to the effecting so great and

* This argument is similar to one made use of by the author in a former work, published many years since, but without his name.

so desirable an object and good. The law of the moral nature in the mind is that fixed law of direction to good, and having seen the law, it only remains with men to follow or observe it as it is practicable.

If I have been prolix in this subject of the obstacles to moral direction in the errors and ignorances of men, I have to apologize that the subject is one of the greatest interest as regards human actions, and demanded much consideration. This I hope I have given it, and in a manner to satisfy every one who will give the subject attention, of the truth of the moral law, and its agreement with faith and religion, in all reasonable and consistent views that man is capable of giving either subject.

Further causes opposing the law referred to and considered.

There are some other causes yet to advert to, opposing the direction to good that man has in this law of his moral nature, which I shall next proceed to notice.

Inherent causes in opposition to the subject moral.

Besides the sources of misdirection or opposition to that which man has by this moral law in the direction of his mind, and which by such direction man can only approve, is that of its own opposition to itself and its own approval in relation to man. I say pointedly in relation to man, because in other subjects men only pursue knowledge to attain truths and facts in regard to such for their better guidance and direction as it may concern either the right or wrong, the good or bad; but in morals, in

that concerning man himself, there is a property or quality in his nature to run counter to what is right or good in regard to the subject man himself. There are the causes before noticed, and there are besides the inclinations, dispositions, passions, and generally vicious occasions of impulse operating in man, moving him opposite to his own good, and the law directing him to that, and which, directed by that law, he can approve, but such causes inducing him to act contrary to what is his own good.

That the mind does act in opposition to its own direction by this law of its moral nature and approval may be instanced the cases whenever men do or act wilfully or knowingly wrong ; he is then opposing the law of his direction, and that which he can approve morally, or as to man.

A man in reason can only approve his safety, his health, his general welfare, but we shall see him disregard without cause his safety, or wantonly expose himself to danger, or seek it. He may have temptations or wish for things unwholesome, or do acts injurious to his health, as in drunkenness, gluttony, and intemperance, and may disregard his general interests in life in indolence, idleness, and carelessness. He cannot approve these things in reason for himself, for in reason that alone which is consistent with his good, and beneficial, is accordant with this law ; and directed by it, that only he can approve. And therefore in doing or acting in such ways prejudicial to himself, the mind directing him, is directing man in oppo-

sition to this law of reason and contrary to what it can approve.

In anger, bad, cruel, and revengeful passions, and in malignity of mind and feelings, man may be evil disposed to others, but he cannot in reason approve of evil for men, or what is bad, baneful, or destructive ; and we may take as an instance the greatest injury that can be inflicted on man, although there may be many degrees of injury less than this that may be inflicted on men, alike wrong or bad. We will take then the case of murder, killing a man without cause or provocation, further than in the bad and vindictive disposition that may exist in men to compass their own base and vile purposes. A man directed by this law, to be accordant with reason, cannot commit murder, and in reason applied to the consideration of man cannot approve of murder ; but yet, contrary to this law, or not approving, he may choose or elect to do or commit what his bad passions, desires, inclinations, or disposition prompt him in ; and he may use his mind or reason in effecting the objects and purposes of his bad disposition, and in direct opposition to his mind and reason applied to the consideration of man, and the direction of this law and what he can approve in respect of man.

Man is directed in these instances by his mind, and is assisted by his reason in aid of or pointing out what will best accord with or effect his purpose of wrong or injury to another, or the vicious propensities as regards himself ; his mind and reason,

therefore, directs and assists him in such cases. This is the reason acting in its executive capacity, but not considerably of the subject moral. This is not reasonable for man, but reasonable only as opposed to man, because for man, man cannot in reason commit or approve of murder, or robbery, or injustice ; neither can he in reason do or approve what is injurious or baneful to himself, but his bad disposition, his revengeful and malignant passions, his avaricious and selfish inclinations, his vicious desires, may induce him to such acts—but, as before observed, he cannot do these consistently with this law or approve them in reason for man, and he is in so doing acting in contravention of the direction of his law in his moral or reasonable nature, but which nevertheless exists, and is a sure and certain law directing him to good and in what he can approve, and when he acts in such manner adverse, as described, makes man know, or renders him conscious, that he is doing wrong.

The law
though op-
posed is yet
the means of
direction to
good, and
man has in it
his means of
correction.

What I have to call the attention to, in men pursuing their inclinations or their passions, either contrary to their own individual good or that of others, is, not doing what this law directs, or they morally can approve, either as to themselves or to others, for this law is the direction to good, and by its direction that which men can only approve, notwithstanding the inclinations, desires, passions, or malignant dispositions to the contrary, or opposing such direction ; and

the law of his moral nature and reason of the being man, interposes its direction to the good, by pointing good out to him as consistent for man, and therefore reasonable and what he can only approve, notwithstanding all the influences he may have to follow a contrary conduct ; thus giving him knowledge of what is right or correct for him to do, or what is good, notwithstanding a contrary inclination or inducement he may have to act otherwise ; and that however accordant with reason as his acts may be for the evil purpose, yet such acts are not accordant with reason for the purposes of humanity, or consistent with the conduct of a reasonable being regulated by that distinguishing character in reference to the being man, possessing it.

The observation to be made where a man acts wrongly, knowingly so, is that although he has the means of his direction to what is right and yields or gives way to influences of a contrary nature or tendency, he does not exercise control or command to observe the direction by the law of his moral nature ; but he must in these cases take the consequence of wilful and knowingly guilty acts or conduct, either in the evils or mischiefs they produce to himself directly, or in the punishment of the disesteem of men, or of the laws, where such acts may be noticed by them ; and he will be judged, and he will be approved or suffer accordingly in the good or bad opinions of men as concerns him as he acts well or ill.

As to bad, wrong, and evil disposition, arising

in vicious propensities, in angry feelings or passionate nature, bad desires and inclinations, and, generally, bad and malignant dispositions, there is no denying their existence ; and as such, that they necessarily oppose the direction men have to good in this law of their moral nature.

The moral nature, as well as common nature, are liable to good and evil, but the moral nature, in a degree, affords means of self correction.

The power and disposition to do wrong form part of the constitution of man, of human nature, and are that property or quality in his being that lead and influence him to do what is improper, inhuman, wrong, or prejudicial to man, and his mind as a directing agent or power may aid and assist in so doing, as well as to the contrary in doing what is right or good ; but the law of his direction in his moral means of the mind, is a law of its action that is the direction to good, through the characteristic distinguishing him as man of reason, which I affirm as a fact, and have endeavoured, and I hope successfully, to have displayed. And that in reason, as a reasonable being, he can only reconcile to himself to adopt and follow the good as consistent for man, in preference to the evil, which is inconsistent.

Both animate and inanimate things, but without minds, are alike subjects of good and evil in what will be of benefit and what will be of harm, but not knowing this through the intervention of the consciousness of mind, have no such election which that gives to man, and must take their chances and

abide the consequences, (as man also must do when he cannot discern the right or wrong.) But man having mind, and seeing and knowing the one and the other, either by experience, or being taught in education, has his election as far as he can see, and it is in his power to act, or within his means to compass, and he has in his moral nature this law of his reason directing him to good. A result or act of his characteristic distinction of reason, by which he is approving that which is good, and repudiating the contrary, or evil, for his direction above all other created things.

The correction of the evil or bad disposition rests with reasonable man in the direction of himself, according to that distinguishing power or property of mind applied to man, in what is good, right, or proper for man as he can see and morally approve. If passion, or anger, or vicious propensities, induce him to act injuriously, it is opposed to this law of reason, and he cannot approve that for man, and therefore, guided by reason and pretending to the privilege or superiority of man in that, he can only in reason rule himself by that means which gives him, and in fact is, that pre-eminence he claims, and should refrain from that which is contrary to that law and he cannot morally approve to be consistent, and to claim his distinction, his privilege, and pre-eminence of man in that distinction. The practical effects of bad disposition and bad conduct will also aid to make him resist and avoid the acting wrongly or injuriously, especially as af-

feting others in the danger of offending them, and the good or bad opinion of mankind founded in just discrimination of his actions, and the effects of these and the punishment of the laws of the civil authorities and powers, where good laws have any force or effect.

Of real ill, or bad disposition, the evil resulting from proneness to such in the individual himself, where he is the victim of it, such we need not incumber the present work with observations upon, farther than such must correct themselves, or they take the consequence of the punishment they bring on or inflict upon themselves. Where their conduct affects others, or the effect of their bad or ill disposition is felt by others, the mischief done, or odious nature of them, will in some measure cause that offence to and disgust in others as will bring down on the guilty the punishment of the disregard and dislike of their fellow creatures, and where deemed necessary the vindictiveness of the law of the civil authorities.

Probable
good effect of
science in
correcting bad
or evil dis-
position.

But I consider the knowledge of the moral nature and of the direction of science in man by his mind and reason, the law of its action being pointed out directing him to good, will operate very strongly to assuage and correct the passions and angry feelings of the malignant and bad disposition of men, subdue them, and keep men in the course pointed out by their better knowledge, and his sense and reason enlarged by those means ; as also

to correct the ill and perverse dispositions of mankind, by reflecting on what governs and directs men, namely, their mind and reason as the distinction of man, and under which alone they can claim any consideration superior to, or preferable estimation to other creatures and things; and that if this pre-eminence is lost sight of, or is yielded, or not regarded, men yield up or cease to have that ground of distinction or regard which they can claim and assert as men. Under the idea of which benefit they have in their moral nature in their rights, raised and clearly substantiated and established on this law of their moral nature; and the loss they sustain in the abased state as beings having forfeited, in the estimation of their fellow creatures, the good, rights are the title of all men to have in that consideration, the result of their reason and their moral nature; men may see and feel motives in their minds, operated on by these reflections, to call them to a sense of regard of the law of their moral nature, and reclaim them from vice and bad conduct the proneness of bad disposition might incline them towards, and by reclaiming them exalt them to the distinction of morally governed beings in defiance of bad disposition.

Such considerations offer to us the hope of what may be the effects of the better knowledge of the moral nature of man, and of the law and rule he has in it for his direction, when considered, even in adversely disposed subjects, and will be the result of the advantage of such knowledge.

What we gain, therefore, by the consideration of the moral nature of man in his power or means of direction by his mind, is that he has a law or rule for his direction operating in that nature to his good or benefit, although there is at the same time the power and means in that power directing him, of frustrating, or acting contrary to that direction, but which his reason distinguishes and claims for his attention to refrain from. It is this law of the direction to good existing within man of his moral nature, that I seek to point out and display for the instruction of others, who may not advert to it, or see it without consideration, or it being pointed out to them.

It is scarcely requisite to say I am not considering the opposite causes in men, and which direct them to the contrary, but as these causes do exist, and interfere with his better direction, that they may be seen ; and why they are not to direct him, because contrary to good, and opposing that which he is directed to by the law of his moral nature ; but in these sources of misdirection, or opposing that direction, I have referred to and sought to exhibit and explain, are, in such opposing causes in themselves, evidence and proof of the existence and reality of the law of his direction, which they oppose, and of which they are the reverse, as by the existence of the one, the opposite or opposing direction, the direction opposed is proved to have existence. Whence, then, does man derive his direction to that which is good, but in the existence of

that law of his moral nature I have referred to, and shewn does exist within him, directing him to good, and cannot do otherwise for human direction by the action of the mind, in its peculiar feature or property of reason, which characterizes and distinguishes the human being, when such power or means of the human mind is directed to the consideration of itself, in the human being blessed with the distinction, and is the design of the Omnipotent Creator in enduing man with it, manifest for his direction.

OCCASION OF THE LAW NOT BEING SEEN.

Occasion why
the law of our
direction has
not been seen,
or if seen, not
sufficiently
noticed.

THE next subject I propose to consider is the cause that may have prevented men seeing, or not noticing the law of their direction in their moral nature.

We have in an earlier part of this work had occasion to refer in passing, when considering the ideas entertained of rights, to advert to the cause why men have not seen this law directing them, we shall now more fully consider this matter.

There no doubt may be many causes or circumstances conspiring to the prevention of men discerning the law or rule of their direction, so as to be

able to explain it, although practically proceeding by the law in all they do, estimable or beneficial for man ; and one cause, if not the source of all other causes, is in the imperfection of the human judgment, and mind, or errors and mistakes men are always liable to, or what is termed the error of the judgment, and what may be termed its incompetency or fallibility.

Imperfect and incompetent as the mind may be, as it certainly is, for an all-sufficient or never-failing means of our direction in its discernment, or our control ; yet it is the only means man possesses, and which is his characteristic in all he does, and all that proceeds from him, human and moral ; and we presume to no more than what this power or means gives, but to as much as it will give, that we should aspire to, and endeavour to learn and ascertain, and to do more is not our attempt.

Not that I assume to have done all that can be done in this business of setting forth the powers man has for his direction ; neither is it for any man to presume that he has explained sufficient for the human direction ; and in the many new cases that may result from the science of the moral power, and new positions men may be placed in, can we ever say that the labours for the moral good shall cease. All that we assume, is to open the subject of the moral means of direction, as a science, on the truth of a fixed and positive law for his direction, plain and easy to be recognized when pointed out and considered, and which may, as undoubtedly such will

better enable him to see and judge, and control him in promoting the object of moral good ; and which may, as we fervently hope, lead the way to the steady and certain improvement of the state and condition of man universally.

The imperfection of the mind that deters men from looking to it, as seeking his authority in it, is, if we will consider, not in the law of its direction to good, but in the judgment in what is of good. The law is fixed and certain in what is fit, proper, or good, is consistent, and is therefore reasonable ; but what may be fit, and being so, good, is variable ; and in this the judgment may fail men, as in that which may be of good, or of which the good consists in matter, act, thing, or substance, they may be mistaken. And men, in judging of the imperfection of the mind, condemn it, or denounce it as an authority, in that where it may fail them ; but never seeing the law or rule it gives them for their direction to good, by what is reasonable, which direction never fails them. Man has only been blind to this for want of the plain inquiry, What is the direction of his moral means ? and because practically acting on it, the question does not occur.

The errors or mistakes of men will be in the relative good ; this will depend on circumstances, and be ever varying for what will be fit, proper, of use, benefit, or service to man ; and practically considering the relative situation of man, and the moral concerns of man in duty, or recognition of the good or interests of men in their relations and

concerns, and in accordance with the rules or precepts we have to direct us in such relations, and which we may term complex good, may and will occasion difficulty ; but there cannot be an error in the law of our direction to that which is good, in what is fit, proper, or is in agreement with, or is of benefit and good to man, and consistent for the subject moral, therefore reasonable. Yet men must refer to the mind to judge of that which is of good, and which will be, though fallible in its powers of research, inquiry, and investigation, the better means of his guidance and discrimination than is possessed by any other created beings not so blessed.

The moral means, notwithstanding its fallibility, is yet a superior means, above all others in man, for his direction.

May I not ask, then, without presumption, Why will you reject the mind as the power or authority for human direction ? and instead of rejecting it, am I presumptuous in asserting it to be the best and highest authority man can have, through his own means, as a mortal of this earth, for his direction, and by which he is made and accounted a responsible being ?

It is necessary for him to study and consider it, the same as he would any other subject, to see its merits, and the mode and process of its action for his direction ; this only is what he has not done ; on the contrary, in its imperfection he always appears to have been himself the victim of its weakness, and never made due inquiry and research into its nature, law, or mode of direction, and learnt how far it is efficient.

The imperfection of the mind has always led men away from the reliance on the human power as the authority of man, and the more learned and more considerate men have been, feeling the imperfection, the more modest and humble in confiding to the powers and authority of man. I assume no greater competency than others ; all that I say is, man as a being blessed with the power distinguishing him from all other creatures, let us inquire into, examine, and study his means in that power, its laws and rules of action ; and let us see what means it affords for our direction, as well as, and as far as we can, and the better to conduct us in the sphere assigned to us for our works and labours ; assured as we must be in the possession of the means, that it must be for us to apply them and use them for our direction.

As to the matter, act, or thing that is good, it is quite true the judgment is liable to error, and men are incapable of seeing and judging rightly in many cases, but nevertheless it is the only means man has of deciding by his mind, in its powers of discernment, its reason and judgment.

In subjects we are ignorant of, or have but little knowledge, and in new matter, and new cases, the liability of error and misjudging cannot be denied ; but does this apply so much to matters moral, as to subjects foreign to human nature. Subjects moral relating to man is surely more within the scope of man's power to investigate, and within himself, of his own qualities, power, and nature, the power

moral itself, and wherein judgment can only be his guide, which is the case with the subject moral, or of man himself; and if it is failing, yet it is his only means; and our duty and the law of our direction is to make the best use of it we can, and exert ourselves to the best of our power to discover what is relatively of good, as the cases may arise. This is reasonable, and this is in accordance with the law of our direction to good.

Let us take the fact of man having a positive and fixed law in his moral means or nature directing him to his good, by what is reasonable in that, fit, proper, of use, or benefit to man. Of that which does agree or accord with man, there can be no doubt in the human decision, in the direction of man by reason, accordant to reason, seeing it, that is reasonable; and directed by this, his election or choice of that is reasonable; and otherwise is not reasonable. But of what does so agree may not only be difficult to see, or decide upon, and he may be incapable of seeing what is right or wrong, and mistaken in either case.

It appears to me, that people in undervaluing the mind as a means of human direction, confuse and make no distinction between what is good in the estimation of the mind, and what is so in the acts or things they have to judge of. The rule they have in the mind by what is reasonable, is what is fit, proper, or of benefit, accordant with the subject considered, is consistent, and therefore reasonable; and whatever is so, or they can see and discern is

fit, or proper, or of benefit, or so accordant, is good, is consistent, and is reasonable, and that they have their direction in by reason. The rule of their estimation is sufficiently evident and clear for all to know and understand, and all practically do act upon it; but when they have to consider and judge what is in accordance with the rule in that to be judged, it is here that the fallibility of their powers of discrimination is witnessed; and in what is fit, proper, of use, or benefit, effective of that, or preventive of hurt; or what acts or things shall be or not serviceable, as promoting the moral good, or more or less effective, or more or less preventive of hurt or injury of that; or the less hurtful or injurious, where mischief or some injury is unavoidable, in such cases the good in these cases, or the relative good, the mind, in its power of discrimination, may not be capable of seeing or judging, or at all times, or on all occasions, where it may be required.

It should be observed, that there is no deficiency in this law directing man to good for want of rule in the mind's estimation of good, as that which is fit, proper, or of benefit, in whatever that is, or wherever it is, that can be discerned or seen to be so, such is consistent with the subject considered, and that the moral subject or man, the human good, and consistent, is therefore reasonable, and the direction he has by that means, therefore there is no deficiency in the law; but it is in the discernment,

in the acts and matters, the material subjects and concerns of men, that the fallibility is existing ; nevertheless, failing as the powers of man may be in his discrimination, yet it will be the best and only means man has ; and failing as it may be, is notwithstanding superior to all other powers or means known to man, and making and rendering him superior to all other created things or beings known to man on his own earth.

And not examining, therefore, into its nature or means of direction, he has failed to see reason is a law directing man to good ; and has not fostered or cherished that authority as he would do, seeing the truth and simplicity of the law he has, and that all good and benefit resulting to man by his moral means is proceeding from, is resting with, and dependent upon it ; and that in truth he always is acting on it practically, in whatever good or benefit he does or effects designedly, or intending to do what is right, just, or proper for man. But not seeing it, or the plain simplicity of the rule he has in reason directing him to good, he has mixed and mystified his ideas in this respect, by his imaginative powers and conceits ; and very often through such confusion has perverted that power designed for his correct guidance into error and misdirection. This, however, shews the necessity of studying and learning the nature of the moral powers, to see the law afforded to us, and which does not present or disclose itself to us without our inquiry and consider-

ation for our more right and correct knowledge, and the law we have in it for our direction, and is the purpose and labour of the work before us.

However inefficient the knowledge of man, and failing and weak his judgment in some respects, it notwithstanding makes him superior to all other created beings of his own earth, he must be content with it, failing as it may be, and the wisest course for him is to see and learn in what its failings are, that if possible they may be corrected, or its deficiencies supplied. He would then see its failing was only in the decision or judgment on the relative cases, in which on every occasion and on every subject he must be liable to error, as the change and variety of relations are endless ; but he would see that it nevertheless was governed by a fixed and positive law of direction to good, in which it was in truth never failing ; but that he has not seen this only for want of due inquiry.

His own want of knowledge, which it is the object of science to supply, has alarmed the good-intentioned in the weakness that shews itself in this respect of judging of the relative good, and has deterred him from relying on his moral judgment, and to look for the rule or law it affords him. This has led men to the condemning of their own powers for their direction, and has opposed their seeing or recognizing the only means they have, and by which they have superiority above all other beings created, and they have been practically only pursuing their objects in the sphere of their action in this world,

instead of pursuing them with science and the true knowledge that affords them.

In the humility of the mind seeing the more by what it does see, its own inferiority, and insignificance, to that Divinity to whom all creation owes existence, it has in a mistaken view of its inferiority, considering it only by its failings, instead of the pre-eminent powers and capacities, with modest diffidence, rejected any authority founded in itself.

It is to such cause we must ascribe that the many great and eminent men of learning and powerful minds who have written on and considered the subject moral, or man, in regard to the rules and principles of his action, not having proceeded on the law to be found within himself, and sought for it in the nature of the moral being itself, the law and rule which governs and directs, in the law and rule derived from that nature the Creator himself has founded, and fixed in his creature man for his direction ; but which law or rule requiring the search and examination of man into his own nature in this respect to see, and understand, the same as inquiry is required to find the laws or rules of the nature of any other subject.

There is no presumption on the part of the creature thus inquiring, and proceeding on what he learns and sees in such research in himself, than in any other subject. There is nothing assumed to himself separate from or in defiance of his dependence on the Supreme Being, the creation and existence of that creation is dependent on and subservient

to. It is the law of his nature only that he sees, and learns of his moral constitution, implanted in him by his beneficent Creator, and for the object in this inquiry and knowledge hoped to be gained for his better direction and performance of the purposes of the powers with which he has been endued and blessed.

The law in truth is not of his own origination, but in that nature it hath pleased the Almighty to bless his creature man with, and who only sees it by search and inquiry, but which it was designed should be made by having the means given to make it, and that man can and was only to see, by the use and exertion of those means he was possessed of in his peculiar, or moral nature, as a matter of science or knowledge, acquired through the intervention of those means and powers man is endued with.

The insufficiency or inefficiency of the mind for human direction, which has operated to prevent men seeing the law of their direction, by inducing men to reject the authority of the mind in consequence, and has deterred them from looking for any authority to be derived from that source, has, when we inquire into the subject, really no existence ; for when we inquire into the law of that nature operating in man, we find in reason the plainest rule for his direction to that which is reasonable, which is good ; and that in fact there is no such inefficiency in his moral power, as supposed, of giving him, or being a law or rule for his direction, as this law is a fixed and positive law for his direction to good ;

for discovery of which law or nature it required only examining the moral nature of man, as to its law of direction, and which, pointed out, must be plain to all men.

The failing or inefficiency is not, then, in the law of his nature ; he has only not seen it, or has not been led to the consideration of it. The law or rule of his direction exists within him, he has only not seen it ; this he was to learn and acquire a knowledge of, the same as in other things that present themselves for his inquiry and research.

That the apprehensions of the mind in its own weakness and failings, has led men away from the consideration, so as not to see it, or has operated on them to prevent them seeing the law of his direction in his mind, is, I think, very evident. But that this law of their nature has not been seen, or if seen, not admitted so as to be instructive, I consider there would be no occasion to occupy the reader with adverting to the cause which may have prevented men seeing it ; and were it not that it may be of use now to shew men their mistakes, and to satisfy them, that not having seen the truth of the law of their moral nature before, or attending to it if it has been seen, has been through want of directing their inquiry on it, in a proper manner, from causes existing, which are capable of being explained in the way already stated, and to dispel any doubt or any misgiving men may have of acknowledging the law when it is pointed out to them, because the law of his direction to good in the moral

nature seen, or the attention of men called to it, brought before them in a more plain view, may excite surprise and distrust, merely from that circumstance of considering the subject in a way they have been unused to do.

I may further observe on this subject of the cause that has prevented men seeing the law they have in their own nature, that not looking to the moral means as it is, a law directing them to good, but under the impression of the mind's failings, considering only the deficiency of the mind in its errors, or liability to error in judgment, of what is in accordance with the good, and the want of control of the mind on occasions of inducements not to obey or observe that which is good ; men could never, without inquiry and examining the powers or means of man's direction in his mind, suppose that in the mind they would find the authority for imposing the restraints and endurances which are required of them by the precepts of life which they are taught, or learn in practice, and which are so habituated with us by practice, and learnt so gradually in our growing up into life, that they are supposed by some to be innate feelings or ideas.

In the precepts are the rules for the limits and restraints upon their actions, and endurances, and sufferings they are to bear ; and which are, in fact, the practical modes or limits to their actions, by which the law of their direction can be adopted and followed, or observed. These limits or restraints in the precepts required for the practice of good,

are designated as precepts of virtue ; and men under this impression of the errors of the judgment, and of the disposition opposing these precepts, would never suppose that in the mind itself they were to look for the authority to man for giving him these rules, and imposing the restraints and endurances required of man, and it would be considered a vain and useless attempt, and be supposed that such rules or precepts never could be, found, or expected to be found in any authority of the human mind. I say, on the contrary, if he will look into the nature of that power, and means they have for their direction in its action, man finds his direction to good ; and his authority in this, for all necessary restraints, and submission to all necessary endurances.

Exemplification of the cause why men have not seen their law directing them. I will now proceed to exemplify that the supposed inefficiency of the mind, or human judgment, has led men away from looking after their authority in the mind as the means of human direction, or has misled men from considering the mind as such.

Let us take that common and well known precept termed honesty, a term applied to fair and upright dealing, the just consideration of others in the relations with them, and in more particular application of the meaning of the term, that man is to practise and observe the truth in all his words, declarations, and dealings, or transactions, and is to shun fraud, deceit, or falsehood ; and that he is to do what is just and right, and not to be guilty of

injustice or wrong, or to pilfer, rob, or steal. This is a necessary rule in the practice of life, and men learn what honesty is, or are taught it, in good and civilized education; and all are more or less acquainted with it in the course or experience of their dealings and transactions with other men. This is the practical knowledge they have of good, in this rule or precept of honesty, and this knowledge teaches them consideration of others in their dealings, puts limit and restraint in their own acts and proceedings, as also endurances where truth and just dealings by others may impose privations, and endurances on themselves.

This idea of moral knowledge and good, has led them to consider good only in practice, and as a measure of limit, and restraint, forbearance and endurance, and this seeing the precept only under practice, has shut out the consideration of the mind as the authority of man for pointing out or imposing the required restraints and endurances, however in practice they felt that such were necessary, and so learnt the precept, from experience, to have the requisite respect and consideration of others, and the rules of action termed honesty. But they have only thus practically seen or noticed the good, and learnt the rule for effecting it in the precept of honesty; and all their acquaintance with it, so far, is but in such practical knowledge. A mode of human direction by which men certainly, adhering to the rules, may very effectively attain their good; but it is not so efficient means, and so secure from

errors, mistakes, and perversion, as that knowledge of the law of the moral nature or moral means obtained in science.

In such practical views only, men have not considered, nor have they seen, their direction to good in the law they have in reason, as a positive or fixed rule of direction to good. But it is quite evident that men have a fixed and positive law in what is fit, proper, or in agreement or good, and consistent, in reason, that only being known or recognized by what is so, as applied to or considerate of any subject ; and the subject moral, or man, by what is so as to man, or the human good ; and what is otherwise is not reasonable, according to the rule or law in a moral sense or meaning, use, or application of such power. And it is likewise quite evident, it is this law which directs men to good in the precepts of honesty, for that is a rule of action for good, and acting by human means they are directed by the mind and reason in that, and which are operating in directing men therefore to good, in the precept or rule of honesty, as a mode of action for effecting it.

It is in the human power to act otherwise, and there are causes which have been noticed, which notwithstanding the law of his direction, that induce or make him act otherwise ; and in this wrong direction, also aided by the application of reason ; but then this is only in its executive capacity that such appliance of it is made ; and it is not in such case used or applied morally or con-

siderate of man, but inconsiderately and immorally applied. In the use of reason, as morally applied for the subject possessing it, he can only approve rationally for that subject what is good, and approving, feel authority, sanction, or justification directed by such law as a moral or rational being, in what is good or is consistent, and consistent is therefore reasonable ; for they cannot have any authority, sanction, or justification in reason, by what is inconsistent and contrary to it ; and therefore as a reasonable being he has authority only in what is good, or what is consistent and is reasonable, and he has none in what is contrary to it ; that he is to resist, and oppose, and avoid, to be consistent, or in conformity with the law of his direction by reason considerate of man.

But the fixed or certain nature of the law of reason in what is fit, proper, in agreement, or good, has not been seen, or if seen, has not been sufficiently attended to as such fixed and certain rule or law directing man ; and it is not seen without enquiring into and referring to the mode of its acting, which then is seen or recognized by what is fit, proper, in agreement or good, and consistent, and therefore reasonable ; which has before been shewn.

He has not seen this, and does not see this fixed or positive nature of the law without enquiry ; because men assign the precept or virtue of honesty, to other authority and to other sanction for regarding it, than the law of reason directing man. Such as good itself being the authority of man, and sanction

for doing good. And this is seen in giving "rights" to the things good, as noticed in the previous part of this work.

In science we shew it is the discernment of his moral means in mind and reason, and the rule or law of direction he has in that, although he may not see or be aware of such law acting in, or influencing him, being a fixed and positive law of direction to good; and the authority to be in that power or means directing him, or morally in the human means, and distinguishing man as such, above all other created beings as known to him; and by such means therefore when enquired into and a knowledge of their nature obtained, men have in them the means of their direction to good.

Impressed with the errors and misjudging of the mind, he has been afraid to look back, and make his research in that means of agency he has, and moving man either in good or in evil. Alarmed at the shadow of darkness, which seems to veil the moral nature in mystery till examined, he has been afraid to probe and search into his nature, and to examine the original source whence his acts proceeded; consequently he has not seen the law in his nature of reason directs him to good, as reasonable, and repudiates and disowns the evil as unreasonable.

Seeing, therefore, that honesty limited the good as to the individuals, and imposed the endurances they were to sustain, the well-intentioned and virtu-

ously disposed, not making research into their power and means of direction in their mind, would never think of placing their authority in that power open to error, and subject to misjudgment, and the means of agency both to good and to evil.

They would and do approve of the precept for the good found in, or resulting from the practice of honesty, and by habit they would only consider the good to be sanctioned by the precept of honesty as their authority ; and the mind, although the means directing this, would never be thought of as that power alone which was their authority for their good, and at the same time the authority that imposed restraint and endurance ; such would appear to require some deeper penetration to discern, and authority beyond and superior to the human mind, to raise up or to impose.

Lawgivers, philosophers, wise kings, holy men, prophets, and religion, have all been appealed to as authorities for virtue, and the regard of the precepts of life in honesty. We revere and duly appreciate such universal and reverential sanction ; but we also say, the law for human direction to virtue is in the moral nature, and which, when examined into, science displays to us.

In practical knowledge the mind, therefore, busied or occupied only by the precept, it never sees in itself the source of, and authority for the precept in the power or means it is itself to the human direction, and that in truth it is the mind's act in its judgment discerning such modes of action as the

precept, and approving such by the law of reason, for the good in practice.

It has not done this. It has only considered its own weakness, and inefficiency, in its mistakes, and disinclinations, and assistance to such disinclinations afforded by its agency; and consequently, under such failings, men do not see their law in their moral nature or means directing them, and that the appliance of such moral power and means of the mind to man, produces the precept in the restraints and endurances requisite to be observed for the practical working or effecting of good by man to man. At the same time, ever referring to, and judging of every thing as good or not by that power directing them of the human mind, they so reject.

An anomaly reconcileable only by ignorance, resulting from want of inquiry, and asking of themselves in that very power of the mind itself, what is the power or means that governs or directs man, and what does that power sanction as human direction, and tracing its mode of action, that it is in reason directing man by what is in accordance with that means, or is reasonable, is consistent, and is good, that is, their authority, that all men have the same authority, and that for effecting of which good by man for man, restraints and endurances are required.

Thus have men rejected their authority, by that very same power which is their authority, by not knowing or endeavouring to gain a knowledge of itself.

Thus has the power of mind rejected itself under ignorance of itself, imagining its own failings the evidence of its incapacity, and its vice, neither of which affects its judgment or power of direction for what man ought to do, although it may not always see what that is, or which shall be in agreement with, or in conformity with good this law directs him to, and he ought to do; but never even in practice mistaking the rule, in canvassing what is good, but not seeing the rule of his action in his moral or reasonable nature, as the law and operation of the mind, as it really is, but which only acts, as it is supposed, in such mistaken view as the agent of the higher authority, or what is so considered, of the precept.

Men, in truth, have been always viewing and judging of the mind by its failings, instead of looking at its powers or means of their direction, and its rule or law for that, or discerning the good as far as it can, and of itself being the means of seeing its own nature in its direction, and of correction of itself, even in its ignorance and errors as to itself.

In fact, mankind in practical life have always known and seen the precept and virtue of honesty, as well as other virtues; but they never, for want of inquiry, could see they were the result of the moral nature, or the mind's action itself, by the law of its own nature directing them to good, and their authority for regarding it, as it is; and that this direction of man is within himself in his own peculiar powers, that of his mind which he has ever

been practically acting by, but hitherto never clearly or certainly discerned.

Occupied as the mind has been in its own agency, it has not occurred that in such agency it was a law. His mind would enquire of and discover the nature and laws, or rules, properties, and modes as to other subjects,—but its own law, and the properties of it, in its fixed and certain nature, and the law or rule of the subject to which it belonged, man, and in truth of more importance than all other subjects, as yet remained for him to enquire into and see.

But seeing the rule or law he has, and that it directs him by what is right, fit, proper, or good, he has the knowledge of his authority ; and therefore as a reasonable being acting by the agency of that power, and asserting his “rights” in his pre-eminence on it, and for the good it sanctions, or authorizes him in, he can only claim his own pre-eminence, his sanction, his authority, and his justification in that, by acting in accordance with it as a reasonable being ; and doing the contrary he has no “right” or authority ; and though when he may be acting contrary to reason morally applied, by the instrumentality of the power of the mind, and its agency in reason in its general capacity, or in its executive power, he is perverting it, misusing it, and abusing it, as affects or concerns man :—to whom, and for whom, it is the law of his action, and must be regarded to meet with his approbation as a moral or reasonable being directed by that means, which is his pre-eminence and distinction.

The result of the inquiry made as to the law of the human judgment, or the power of the human mind, shews that in it, by his power and agency in its action, he has the law or rule for his direction to good, that is his authority for it, and in such authority are his rights to good, and that for this the respect and consideration of man towards man for effecting such good is required ; and that this power or means of his direction gives him the precepts, as rules by which such good can be effected by man towards man, as practicable for the general good. That such authority which are his rights, namely, in this law directing man, requiring or imposing that which is necessary or required for his good, is at the same time his authority for doing good, and in the same authority which are his rights, are his duties, or authority or obligation as a reasonable being, for acting or doing what is required for the object of his rights in good.

Thus we find by such inquiry into the intellectual means of man with which he is blessed for his government and direction, does the mind learn and instruct itself of its own nature. And the whole moral law and system is laid open before us of the direction of man by his mind, and that in reason as a reasonable being, directed by what is reasonable, he possesses a positive and fixed law of man's direction to his good.

PART II.

THE MORAL LAW CONSIDERED PRACTICALLY.

Adversion to
the principle
or law of
morals having
been explain-
ed as the sub-
ject of the
first part of
the system.

The practical
consideration
of the law
man has in
his moral na-
ture forms
the second
part of the
system.

We have been in the first part of this work considering, and with the view to the explaining and establishing, the direction man has by his intellects, and distinguishing him and his actions by such means as concern or relate to man himself, which we term moral, and all that concerns or relates to it, the moral subject.

I therefore now proceed to the consideration of this law in the moral nature, directing man to his good practically, or the mode or way mankind can act according to this law or rule, or how far they can execute or perform this direction they have to good, and which with propriety we may consider as the second part of this system.

In the inquiry and examination of the powers and means man possesses for his direction, and distinguishing him as a moral being, it is evident that

he has in his reason a law of positive and certain direction to his good. Reason being recognized or known by what is fit, proper, in agreement with, or of benefit morally, or for man, and in this his good, such is consistent for man, and therefore reasonable. And man moved or directed by his mind according to this law in his reason, the direction is to good. We now, therefore, propose to consider how this direction man has in his moral nature can be effected, or the good he is directed to by this law in that nature can be accomplished, or it is practicable.

It may be first useful to advert to the direction man has in his moral means or powers as human authority, or as the means of sanction or justification of his actions accordant to such power, or the direction he has in it.

As human beings men can have no other authority, power, or means of acting than those which man possesses in himself, and which distinguish him as such to be known or recognized as human. His moral means these, they are his authority and sanction and justification for his direction, and acting accordingly as man. These direct him to his good, and he has this authority for asserting, promoting, and maintaining it.

The authority, therefore, which man has in his moral capacities or reasonable nature for his good, is in the direction he has in that nature, and which he sees when inquired into. This is the law or rule afforded to man by his reason, and man has,

therefore, in reason the authority of that power or law directing him for his good, and as a reasonable being he can have no other as such, but he has this ; and has the sanction or justification this gives him for his claiming, asserting, and maintaining it.

This is the right of man ; and his claim, or authority for his good, and his justification in what is so, he signifies or means by that term "right," for his good. Meaning by it, this law of his moral means or nature directing him to his good, and the same authority directing him to do what is required for his good, being his "duty," and meaning the same sanction, authority, or justification for doing what is good, as rests with or depends upon his acts. But as these terms are applied to every thing and every act in which the good consists, or that is of good to man, these terms are generally spoken of or used as applied to all accordingly, and are called "rights" and "duties." The "rights" and "duties" of men we see, therefore, mean the authority which they have in the law of their moral nature of reason directing them to good.

This authority which man has in his moral means is the same in all men ; no one has more or greater, or can have more or greater than another, for that which is good, than this authority they possess in the law of their moral nature of reason.

It gives all the same sanction, and no one more or less than another ; for in the direction it is the same and uniform in all, directing them to good.

It is on this law of human direction, in the reasonable nature or capacity of man, that all men are authorized and proceed in all their acts, and in all measures for obtaining the good of man ; and all institutions of men, and laws, and governments, can only be considered as means adopted for the obtaining it, and authorized by the law directing man. But men, without inquiring for the rule or law moving or directing them, do not see it directs morally, only to their good ; but, as has been before noticed, practically only acting on the moral direction, or pursuing life and actions in it by the aid of their mind, the power they have in their mind, and its capacities, and its failings, and its powers of acting differently from its moral direction in what is good, they mistake or misconceive as want of authority for good, in its enabling them to act contrary to it ; mistaking its power, as well as its weakness for their direction, for its rule or its law of direction ;—unheeding or omitting to notice that the moral rule alone, or its law, directs what is right, or proper, or good ; but of which the study and science of the moral nature gives us the knowledge.

Directed, therefore, by reason to their good, the right, claim, or authority men have for their good, and the respect and consideration of men in their good, is by that law ; and they all have the same right in it, the same authority, sanction, and justification by this law, one as another ; and in the same “rights,” necessarily the same “duties” to

regard and observe it, or do what is good, or what may be required for it. None can boast of pre-eminence in this, none can have less claim or pretensions than another, for it is the same in all, on the authority which all have in that moral nature in the law of their reason directing them to good.

Whatever are, or may be, the ideas and opinions of men, their manners, habits, modes, practices, or customs, laws, institutions, or governments, or religion,—human nature is the same or similar in all, in the moral means possessed within, and distinguishing man; and the study of this, and knowledge acquired of it, is the science of morals or human nature, and is necessary for all to know, being the knowledge of the powers and means possessed by man in his moral or peculiar nature for effecting his good, and the law or rule he has in it for his direction to that end or purpose, that may or does rest with, or depend on him, or his actions, or within his power to effect; and by such knowledge the more correctly or properly, and certainly, to effect his good through the powers and means possessed by man in his moral nature for effecting it.

It will be collected from what has been stated in the first part of this work, and what has been just said or repeated, that “rights” and “duties” are the terms by which men refer to, or use to signify, the authority they have in their moral nature, both in their practical knowledge of their moral means, in their mind or reason ordinarily directing them,

and likewise when more particularly looking into the nature of the law or means of their direction, seeing that such law in their moral nature is of positive and certain direction to that general purpose or object, namely, their good.

The "rights" and "duties" of men, therefore, being the terms by which we signify the authority man has in this law of the moral nature directing him, I shall consider this law practically under these terms, and as meaning that authority, or the sanction and justification which man has in this law of his moral nature of reason directing him to his good.

Equality of rights and duties.

Rights, as the claim or authority of mankind in this law of their direction

to good, belong to all mankind, through the same faculty or means, similar or alike in all men of the mind, in which, exists alike in all men this law of their moral nature in reason, and are a similar and equal claim or authority with all men, one the same as another ; and we can only consider mankind as one great family, all equally and alike entitled to and possessing rights to their good ; and on the same authority of the rights of men in this law directing them to their good, are their duties to do good.

In practice, or what depends on, or what rests with men, or as far as the powers of knowledge, judgment, and actions affect or influence the good of men, or can avoid or avert the evil, the effecting the good and benefit of men and preventing the

evil will result from the consideration or respect of men, and the degree in which this consideration or respect of man is held and observed, or regarded. The good, so far as depending on men, in their rights, therefore, all men are entitled to have this respect or consideration, and in their duties are all men required to regard or observe it, and all equally and alike the same, the one as another ; and there can be no distinction among men as to "rights" and "duties," the law or rule of their moral nature for their direction is alike the same in all, one as another for their good.

Good being a term of general mean-
Good practi-
cally defined. ing of whatever is of use, service, or

benefit of man applying to any thing and every thing that is good, or of good, it will be useful in considering the subject of rights to this good practically to have a more defined idea, and so far necessary that men may all know, or have their attention kept to, those specific objects which concern all alike, and that they may generally understand one another in reference to the objects meant by that good. Such idea we may consider as a practical definition of good for the purpose of considering the subject in practice.

I will therefore call the attention to those objects of chief and general concern for the human good or welfare, always premising a healthful and sane state of mind in such considerations, and will enumerate first, life, comprehending under this the person generally, the mind, the body, limbs, speech,

freedom of action or liberty, and enjoyment of these well and healthfully, and generally happiness. Secondly, I will mention property as comprehending the produce or gain of a man's labour and industry, his hire, his wages, and the produce of his skill and ingenuity; land and all its various products, and the creatures and fruits of the earth, and including food, raiment, clothing habitations, and shelter, and all things agreed or understood to be appropriated. And this will apply to the very largest signification of the term, as countries, seas, lakes, rivers, and their produce, stores, buildings, merchandize, and money, or the representative of value of these things in securities or agreements as well as to smallest matters appropriated, the day's meal or provision applied and required for the sustentation of life. And lastly I will enumerate justice, as a fair and equal consideration or respect of every man in his rights to his life and property, on a due regard of circumstances impartially, free of prejudice, and without favour. This will include the good or benefit to be derived at the hands of men by one another, in their actions, conduct, dealings, and proceedings, both as individuals, and in numbers or bodies of men, governments, and laws, and in all the relations of men towards, and by, one another.

These subjects comprehend the most general and important matters of human good or benefit, and as such to which every act and thing may be referred

as applying to one or the other, and which affect or concern the good of man.

Rights being the same in all men, The great moral effect through the law of their moral nature in the equality directing them, and in such their authority of rights.

authority for good, it is in the equality of rights that every man is entitled to his good, and for the respect and consideration of his life, property and justice, the one the same as the other ; and consequently the duties of each are the same, to respect and consider the good of the other, the one the same as another in these things, by the same law, and by the same authority in that law directing them to their good.

This rule, as before observed, admits of no distinction, the respect and consideration required for the good of one man is required for the good of all, each in his rights being equally entitled to his good, and in his duties required to respect or regard such good, or do what is so, the one the same as another.

Each are the subject of this law, one cannot have or say he has greater or less right, or greater or less duty, than another by this law ; for it is the same direction to one as to another, and all alike, and directing all. All are equal, therefore, in the same authority and direction by it, and the subject of the same or equal right and duty one as another. All are alike the subject of its direction and authority and have their right in that to their

good, and the duty to do what is required for it, all equally alike.

It is in this equality of "rights" and "duties" that the respect and consideration of men for their good in their lives, their property, and justice, each the one man the same as another, exist in, or belong to and attach to all mankind; and it is in this equality that the great moral effect of the good of all mankind is wrought or is to be effected, by the rule it produces of the respect and consideration of man by man.

Conscious besides of this law or authority, men directed by it consider themselves responsible, and are held by each responsible, one to the other, for the respect and consideration of their rights and each other's good, and to the performance and observance of the respect and consideration of men to effect that required by their duties, or in doing what is required for each other's good.

Rights and duties attach to all mankind, though only seen or recognized by one portion. Rights being the authority of man in the law of the moral nature, it may be alleged or supposed by some, that where persons had not the full power of their faculties of mind to see and discern what their rights were, that they could have no rights, or would they be capable of knowing or appreciating them, as in infancy or very young people, or beings that were of weak intellect, or imbecile, or labouring under infirmity of mind, or even were people of an adult age, or of maturity of faculty of mind, they might notwithstanding

standing be the subjects of ignorance, errors, or prejudices, and in consequence such might not be capable of the exercise of the right or proper use of their faculties. But if men cannot see, or understand, or claim, or assert their rights for themselves, yet as human beings, those who have possession of their faculties and can see and appreciate what the rights of men are, could not in reason deny that rights belong to them, or that it was not their duty to regard and respect them. The faculties may be dormant, dull, and stupid, or imperfect, but those with their faculties in reason have only their rule for their direction in those means, and seeing others were human beings, they should therefore be regarded as such, and respected and considered in what was their good, though blind to it, or ignorant of it in themselves; for we could not as reasonable beings say such ought not to be considered, respected, or regarded as human beings; and our own reason would assign such consideration of them, and would be our authority and direction accordingly, and therefore all would be included as having rights in the authority of man under the direction of this law for the good of man, and it is that we could only approve in reason.

Distinction
between
rights, &c.,
and their ob-
ject.

In the consideration of rights, we have to call the attention to the distinction between rights and their object, and to the fact that rights are not the same with their object in good. The former,

“rights,” are in the authority for his good, directed by this law of his moral nature, and his claim or title so directed, the other, the “good,” is the object or thing to which his rights are asserted, and his claim refers to ; such as life, and property, and justice ; which are not in themselves rights, but are the objects of our rights, the subjects claimed on them, or by them. This distinction is requisite to be attended to, for properly understanding what rights are, and what good is, and the duties are similar with rights and are distinct from the object of them in the acts of good, or required for good, either as to men themselves individually, or the respect or consideration of men in good or the doing good. Duties, like rights, being the authority of the law of the moral nature directing man to good, and, therefore, in his acts to do good, as rests with or is dependent on man to do, and the act good, or the doing good, and the act of respect or consideration of men in their good, is the object or subject of the duties ; and which the duties are the authority in the direction to good for men to do or perform, and the *regard* of life, of property, and of justice, is not in itself “duty,” any more than life, property, and justice are “rights ;” but the act of *regard* of these, the objects of our duties, as the act of good, or doing good, in the regard or respect of life, property, and justice, is the object of our duties.

It is quite apparent that “rights” are not the object, good claimed, or “duties” the object in the

act to be done of good, or which ought to be done, and this is exemplified particularly in regard to the acts of men affecting each other, for a man may be injured in or deprived of his good by another, yet his rights exist all the same to entitle them to consideration, and man may not do good or act justly by another, yet the duty remains to do so. And however people are apt to mix and confound their rights and duties with the objects of them in good, and the act good ; yet such is evidently, when considered, a mistake, or misapplication of the terms, and arises from the connexion there is between rights and duties and the objects of them ; or looking on rights and duties as matters of our approbation in what we can only approve in reason, such arises from the connexion there is between our approbation and the subject of it in that approved.

The misapplication of terms has been and is a constant source of confusion to men in considering the subject moral, as misnomers are found to be in the consideration of other subjects ; but such mistakes ought not to occur now, where instruction is given, now that the distinctions are pointed out.

The importance of the distinction being shewn, and the confusion and evil occasioned by the distinction not

It is of essential use in the practical consideration of that law directing us of our moral nature, the pointing out the difference between rights and duties and the objects of them, to the clear understanding of both subjects, and particularly to see the distinction in

having been seen or made. the nature or character between rights and duties and the objects of them in good, in respect of the equality of rights, and consequently of duties, and of the inequality of the objects of them, or the good. In respect of which rights and the good of men, both have been considered together, in respect to equality, and as the rights of men are equal, so it has been supposed that the rights of men entitle them to equal good, the one the same as the other, and that their good ought to be equal, and should be equalized.

This distinction is, in the practical consideration of rights, the most important matter to call to the attention, and point out, to shew the errors and mistakes men have made in the moral consideration of good, and the practice of it: as agrarian laws and the like notions of equalizing good to men in society.

There is no greater benefit than is resulting to man in the equality of his "rights" and "duties," but there is nothing more impracticable for good than the endeavour to apply the like rule to that object of those rights and duties, in the supposing the like rule of equality applies to the object good, as does to the authority of men for their good, and the regard and consideration of one another in what is so.

This confusion of the subjects of rights and the object of them in good, and the mistake in considering the equality of rights applied to the object of them in good, has been the source of the greatest perplexity to moralists in making the moral dis-

tinctions between what men ought to have, and be considered in, by their rights; and what they ought to have, and can have, and are to be considered in, practically. In the distinction there is between rights and their object, which we learn by the enquiry made in the moral law or nature, and the object connected with it of good, it is seen that the equality of rights does not exist or apply to the object of them, which is not equal. And the supposition that the equality did apply to, or exist, or ought to be in the good of men has arisen from not seeing, or not making the distinction, between the rights of men and their good, and confounding them together as one and the same subject. By which it was imagined that the rights of men being equal, it applied to or meant equal good, as being, or supposing them to be, one and the same thing with their rights; but which are distinct matters, subjects, or things.

It is most necessary, therefore, in considering the subject of rights, to point out the difference there is between them and their object, not only for giving a correct knowledge of the subject, but, so connected as they are, to prevent all mistake, and the confusion, and the errors in such confusion, of the two things, and likewise avoid the difficulties people are so frequently apt to fall into, in considering the subject of morals generally in regard to the claims and rights of men, which appearing to them as one and the same with their object, which plain enquiry shews they are not, of endeavouring to reconcile

the supposed principle of equality of good, with the practice, under the common mistaken notion that all men are entitled to equal good which nowhere in reality exists as a general case or rule, and which is not practicable.

The fact of the equality of rights has been adverted to; but with respect to good, the object of rights, the good of men never can be equal, unless under particular circumstances or accidental causes, which can form no rule for considering the subject generally; and even the particular circumstances under which equal good may occur, such will be only of temporary or of momentary nature, and cannot form any ground of considering it as a rule for general direction; but only the particular case, and will only exhibit the general nature or character of the inequality of good.

Good, of necessity, must be as variable and infinite as the circumstances under which, or by which it is affected, or of its nature in what it consists, which may be very different as to different people.

The good of men is not naturally equal, their strength, their health, their different powers, and, above all, the different virtues and excellencies of their minds, may and will cause different degrees of good in things affected by these means or powers. But beyond this, "property," which is so essential for the benefit or good of mankind generally, and which the idea of equal good is generally referred

to as being a matter equally divisible, it must be apparent, never can be equalized.

It will accumulate in some, it will be various in different degrees of quality, facility of raising or acquiring, and situation ; such alone render it impracticable of equalizing the good of it.

**Exception to
the distinc-
tion between
rights and
their object,
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and inequal-
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But there may be cases in which the good of all, being immediately concerned, is considered equally in property, and it would be unjust not to do so. Such may be instanced where a plot of ground is to be divided equally between all, who may have or derive one common or equal benefit or good in it ; or where a division of lands or treasure is to be made among persons, no one of whom have greater pretensions to it than another ; in these or similar cases, there being a rule of equality in the subject of property, the rights of the individuals correspond in equality with the subject of their property.

Cases also may be instanced in children after the decease of parents dividing their property, or where persons agree among themselves, that the joint produce of their labours, their plans, schemes, contrivances, discoveries, or accidental fortune shall be equally divided, have a rule of equality ; and here the rights again are corresponding in the rule of equality affecting the subject.

These and similar cases are particular cases, dis-

tinct from the general nature of property, or of the good of it, and of its acquirement.

Further explanations in some subjects of rights and good, as to equality in the one, and inequality of the other.

But such cases do not establish the case or fact, of equal good belonging to men as of equal right. It is the rule or circumstance affecting, attached to, or relating to the subject, that renders it equal, and the right happens, as before observed, to be corresponding in its equality with the subject of it, good, in equal degree; and so far, and so far only, is equality of right and equal good corresponding.

The equal good, moreover, in these cases, is not general, but partial, confined to those who participate; but as to any others, or the rest of the society or world, they afford no rule of equal good, and are particular cases, and are not, and give not, a general rule of equal good; but shew by the particular case that good, as a general subject, is not equal. So that the fact holds, that good is not equal, although rights are equal.

The rights, therefore, that men have to their good, can only be considered to such good they have or possess, or belong to them in their persons, or their property, whatever that may be, or of any other interest that may be belonging to them, or of a conventional nature.

Thus rights are their claim to, or their authority for, respect or consideration of these, and the rights of all are equal for their respect or consideration in such good, be it what it may, or greater or less in

one than another, or under the greatest inequality, and in the possessions of property more especially ; and the duties of men are consequent, and equal in all to have respect and consideration of one another in such good. And whether a man possesses greater advantages in his person, or less than another, or his property consists of a hut, or an acre of land, or of palaces and thousands of acres, the rights of all are equal for respect or consideration in these, and the duties consequent and equal in all to have this respect and consideration for one the same as another.

Cases where Cases wherein the distinction of property, as to the exclusive power or privilege, is lost or is absorbed in the ceases.

more urgent circumstances affecting that of which it consists, may be useful to mention. Cases of common danger are these ; distress at sea, shipwreck, war, famine, fire, flood, tempest, earthquake or commotions of the earth, pestilence, and other great and extraordinary events or circumstances. But where causes or particular circumstances cease to act or influence, society returns to their ordinary rules of proceeding. We might instance the case of shipwreck of a vessel with a crew composed indiscriminately of male and female passengers, on an uninhabited but fruitful land, or capable of being made so, where, if supplies to sustain man were found on the first gaining possession, all might be equal, but as the individuals became settled and made divisions of the land, and

cultivated the soil, and raised or made articles of use and convenience, such would become private property, and for the security of such, and encrease and benefit of the society at large, the laws and rules of social intercourse must arise and be established, or the evil of contest and dispute arise, and consequent spoliation and evil follow ; so that it is the occasion, and only such circumstance, that equalizes good and the distinction of property ceases, and while it operates, that renders the deviation from the laws and precepts of life and society of ordinary cases for good, and therefore departable from or justifiably to be laid aside for the necessity or the occasion of doing so, but the principle or law of human direction always operating for good, but varying as it were in its mode of practice in effecting the good, according to ordinary or extraordinary states of society and circumstances under which man may be placed.

The precepts of virtue the mode by which good can be effected.

The next consideration is the mode or way in which the rights of men can be regarded in the good as the object of them, or how the good men are directed to by the law of their moral nature can be effected or accomplished, or men can act according to the direction to do good.

In the accomplishing the object of the rights of men in what is good, it is obvious that the good or benefit of man cannot be wholly or entirely effected.

The good, or benefit, or interests of men inter-

ferring with each other or one another's good, it is impracticable that the good of men can be effected without some detriment or prejudice to each other's good. Each must therefore be subject to diminution or alloy in what is their good or benefit, in regard to that limit or restriction which is requisite upon each to regard that of the other ; and not only is it necessary that the good or benefit of each must be limited or restricted to regard that of others, but it will oftentimes be requisite, not to injure or affect each other's good, that forbearances, privations, sufferings, and endurances are imposed, and must be sustained, for the respect and consideration of one another in what will be to their good, or to avoid their prejudice or injury.

It is the duties of men in this law directing them to good, to do what is requisite for the good, that is the authority imposing or requiring the respect and consideration of men by each other for their good ; the rights entitling all equally to their good, and the duties imposing upon all equally the doing what is necessary for this good, from every one towards the other ; all being equal in this respect of right and duty.

But it is evident that this consideration, or regard, or respect of men for one another, must have limits, or rules, by which it is regulated, for men could never practise the regard and consideration of one another to the omission or neglect of their individual good, and those that are dependent on or connected with or involved with them, as their

wives, their children, their servants, workmen, labourers, and those in a measure, and in some cases entirely, dependent on them ; and the neglect of men of their own good would be evil.

It is therefore evident that men cannot respect or have consideration of others wholly and entirely for their good, to the omission of their own. We refer, therefore, to those rules of action or conduct of men practical knowledge and experience teaches all men, which they do approve, and men observing are considered as acting properly or rightly in relation to what is good, and their actions or conduct deemed good accordingly ; such are rules for effecting the great and primary object of man of good generally, as it can be effected practically by men ; and such rules may be considered as the minor rules of human action or conduct for good in practice, for effecting the great rule of the respect or consideration of men, and the object in that of good as it is practicable.

These rules are what practice learns or teaches us in life, and are the means by which good can be effected by men, with such consideration of one another that is practicable. Men find these in practice, in peace, good will, truth, honesty, charity, mercy, fidelity, justice, and all other genial and humane precepts and virtues ; and for the good in them, or effected by them, or by observing them as rules, are termed virtues, or the virtuous precepts, as the rules for our lives and conduct, and in regarding our fellow-creatures ;

and as opposed to the contrary, or those modes of action that are prejudicial to man, and produce evil, as war, murder, violence, falsehood, deceit, fraud, theft, cruelty, and other acts pernicious and hurtful to man, and are termed vices.

Good, it is apparent, cannot be entirely or wholly obtained by man, but only in degree ; neither can men be wholly and entirely devoted to the respect and consideration of each other in their good ; but these rules by which men can regard one another, in the moral precepts in the necessary actions and transactions of life, refer to those particular modes for the regulation of our actions, and point out the limit or mark the extent to which men may proceed as individuals for their own advantage ; and where they must forbear and endure what is requisite for the consideration of others : and human actions or conduct in conformity with these rules, are deemed good, and men are not held responsible to one another where their interests, or what concerns them, unavoidably clash, or interfere with one another's good, and often to each other's prejudice and injury. But the good in such cases must be relinquished or forborne, and the evil endured or suffered. And here it is in these instances where the virtues of forbearance, restraint, endurance, and sufferings are evinced, and a reasonable cause exists for the exercise of patient enduring in the practice for good, men are directed to by this law of their moral nature. The actions and conduct of men founded on these rules or precepts of

virtue are deemed good, and the contrary, that guilty of the vices, is deemed bad. The one, that which is considered as morally correct or right, or proper, or good, the other that which is morally wrong or evil.

We have seen that it is necessary to limit and restrict the good and the duties correspondently to such limit and restriction in practice, and that our rules for this limit and restriction are in the precepts of life, the virtues of truth, honesty, justice, and the like ; but these rules of practice which regard the good of men by one another practically, and any privations or sufferings or endurances in such will necessarily be sustained and are to be sustained for promoting the good generally of mankind as practicable, are sufferings in good and virtue, and honourable and praiseworthy, and form the greatest merits that exalt the human nature in the moral character or distinction of man, and the object here is good.

A man speaking truth though prejudicing himself and his interests, a man in honesty suffering privation of good or imposing burthens and labour on himself to regard the good of others ; and in justice, acting impartially and without favour, love or affection, fear or reward, for that good ; holds forth human virtue and human excellence in a light that nothing but the moral character of the human being can arrive at, and is the distinctive virtue and excellence that the exalted powers with which we have been entrusted by the Divine Creator in

that power of reason should encourage and support us to do and maintain as the design intended which in reason we are to fulfil.

As to what the precepts of life are in a particular or more specific sense, or as to any more particular notice or explanation concerning them, they are of such common necessity and so well known in the practice and occurrences in life, that I do not consider it is required here to describe or say more of them ; for if they were not sufficiently well known as men shall recognize what is meant or alluded to as the most common rules and principles of life, we should despair of giving any better knowledge of such plain rules or precepts as truth, honesty, charity, mercy, fidelity, justice and other human virtues, at least that would be more useful for this work, than in reference to them.

The science of morals, moreover, supposes some practical knowledge to be acquired, and existing with those who are to consider and study the laws or rules of the subject, that are found and ascertained upon inquiry to be truths, for their better instruction or direction in it. And we do not, therefore, encumber this work with more than is necessary on the subject of the precepts of life in the virtues ; we refer to them as rules, and shew the support they have in the law directing man to his good by their approval for such object and purpose. We therefore must assume the common and plain practical precepts of life are known, and sufficiently known, for the purpose of reference to them to be

of any utility, at least, as far as any reference to them in this work of primary principles and practical consideration of those principles in the law of the moral nature of man, (which we consider as such primary principles,) and as authority to the minor principles in the precepts as the practical rules or modes for effecting the great and general object of good to which we are directed by that great and primary law, rule, or authority of our moral nature in reason.

Why we do not say more on the minor rules or the precepts of life, it may be further necessary to explain. We must put a limit on our work, and the business we assign to ourselves in this work is pointing out the law or rule of the moral nature of man, the exposition or explanation of this law, and establishing that great principle in its direction of man to good ; and next, the practical consideration of this law, which is the present part we are discussing. In this we refer to the rights and duties of men, the object they concern man in of good he is directed to by this law, the nature of that object in practical definition of it that it may be understood, and that men may all understand each other in what is meant by it through the authority of the law directing him. But the rules for carrying that object of man and of the law directing him into effect, as the practical mode of this, must be of common and daily occurrence, and eventually a knowledge we acquire in the practice of life, we enter not into these further than in reference

to them as requisite and necessary for our observance, and as they are required, and to shew the authority for them in the law of our direction ; with such other reference, or mention of them, as we may have considered necessary in the elucidation or exemplification of any part of this work, and the subjects on which it treats, of necessary connection with it.

Extent or limit to which rights and duties can be considered. Having considered the rights and duties of men in what they consist as the authority man has in the law for his direction to good in his moral nature or means or power of his mind for his direction, and the precepts and rules he has for regulating these his rights and duties in their objects in good in practice, it will be next proper to consider the extent to which the rights and duties can be regarded practically in respect to their object of good ; or whether there may not be cases in which the rights cannot or ought not to be regarded, as well as the duties suspended or not responded to.

The rights as well as the duties of man arise or exist in the law of man's peculiar nature directing him to good, and are consequently of a constant or permanent nature or existence with the moral powers or means whence they arise or exist of the mind, or while that power retains its offices of action in a sound and healthy state, thus always existing in man endued with mind and reason its chief and highest attribute. It is to be observed, that the

rights of men being permanent and always existing, and the duties the same with the rights of men, it may be said they never can be destroyed. But there may be occasions in which the one may be said to be forfeited, and the other ceased as a matter to be regarded, or is to be withheld as to the object of good in those cases or subjects, where the right is forfeited as to good. These cases occur where humanity is perverted and ceases to be good ; as where men disregard their duty to their fellow creatures and do evil. Here in the disregard of good, but the practice of evil, men are held to forfeit consideration as to themselves ; because, in duty to do good, men are bound to regard good, they are not bound to regard the evil as such men are.

The precepts of virtue impose restrictions and limits on the individuals for the attainment of good generally, and as practicable, these limits are for good. We therefore see in these limits that the object of men in their rights as to good, is restricted by the regard necessary for the respect of the good of others, and that the same object in the duties of good is likewise limited with respect to what men are to do, and that they are restricted in the good they are to do, either as concerns themselves or others, in what would exceed the limits which the precepts require, and this for the purpose of such good generally to mankind which is practicable.

The good, or what we speak of here by that term, is the benefit, use, service of man, what is healthful, promoting his welfare and his happiness,

and his living, and his enjoyment of life, but limited as practicable.

But the question now proposed for consideration, is not the regard of men in their rights, and respect or consideration of their good, but whether such are considered as having forfeited the regard of their good, and consequently the duties are ceased to have regard of such men.

The case is of those men who do not regard the rights of others or perform their duties by them of doing good, but the contrary do evil. Such men are considered as having forfeited respect of them in their rights and their good, and are the subjects of reproof and condemnation, and punishment, and their fellow men are not any longer held bound to regard or respect such in their good, and are reasonably and justly held released of their duties to regard such in their bad or evil actions as men who do wrong by their fellow men, or what is bad or evil, and act contrary to their duties. Because men in duties are to do good, when men do evil, then evil being the intent or effect of their actions, the duty of men to do good does not oblige others to respect or regard those doing evil ; but to do good their duty is to oppose the evil, as contrary to good, and in respecting and not opposing such men doing evil, they would be doing evil in tolerating and regarding that which is evil, and so far not preventing it but acquiescing in it.

It is clear, therefore, in such cases the duties of men are in reason justifiably ceased to regard the

good of those doing evil, and that they are justified in reason as what is consistent for man for good, and it is their duty not to regard them as the means to oppose and prevent evil, which otherwise they would themselves be doing in bearing with or regarding them that do so.

Consideration
of enforcing
moral con-
trol, or obe-
dience to the
law directing
us morally, by
force, compul-
sion, or
power.

This brings us to the consideration of controlling men by opposition and power of force or coercion, and by art, force, or power to do good and prevent evil. The controlling of men's actions in accomplishing what shall be practicable in regard to the good of mankind in community and generally, in opposing and prevention of bad men doing evil and imposing punishment to prevent the recurrence. To accomplish these objects cannot be left with individuals, either in regard to power to effect, or as to discretion, or for peace and good order. As to power they may be greatly deficient, and in effect powerless, both physically and morally, and likewise from the influence of circumstances ; and as to discretion their judgment may be partial through passions, anger, feelings and interest, and erroneous in judgment through weakness, want of foresight, or caution, or knowledge ; and for peace and order, individuals taking on themselves the coercion of others would create strife, contest, and the disturbance of society ; and therefore, except in cases of immediate necessity, cases admitting of no appeal, or the absence of all means of appeal or reference, and in the dire

occasions of self-defence and preservation of life and property, in the immediate necessity of acting, the control or coercion of men, and the punishment of crime in men committing evil, cannot be reposed or authorized in the individuals as such in society, or cannot with safety or propriety be required of them.

Government
and conven-
tionary law
referred to as
institutions
for effecting
the object of
the moral law
where power
and regula-
tions are re-
quired.

Government and civil or conventional law have been in all ages, states, and societies of men, raised or founded for the protection of the weak against the strong, the just against the unjust, for the forbidding of and prevention of crimes, and punishment of the vicious and criminal, and of offences against the laws required for civil society and executing justice.

Government and law in this respect, as referred to, can only be viewed as the power and voice of the society concentrated in those to whom authority and command is committed or is entrusted to make laws, and with the execution of justice, and such likewise must be considered as having the consent and good opinion of the whole of the people, state, or nation over whom they preside; and that such power and authority are so raised and acting for the purpose and object of the moral law directing man to good. The measures and proceedings of such powers and authorities are judged by the same rule in law directing man, and being in conformity with it, are approved, and as they better or more or

less correspond or agree with the object of this law of human direction, so are they estimated better or worse, or good or bad, accordingly, and ceasing or failing to effect the good and producing evil, they cannot by moral possibility have the consent and approbation of the society.

I refer to the power or means of controlling and coercing men, and accomplishing the object of human direction in good, as recognizing what are the human means of control, and enforcing what is required for effecting the good which man is directed to by the law of his moral nature, and as a means corresponding with that law, or the effective means of accomplishing good by force or power, and effecting its object when control and coercion is required ; but not with the intention of entering upon or discussing the subjects of governments and laws.

The consideration of government and law, further than in reference as to the effective means of accomplishing the object of men in good by power or coercion in cases calling for it, as a subject of polity, is not a matter of consideration in the present work ; which, as before observed, is only the laws and rules of his direction in his moral nature, and as the source or law of every thing human or moral, and subjects in connection with it, as means of effecting its object of good, and the view of that object as it can be practically effected, and by what means, where power and coercion is required, such is supplied, the reference is made.

What is required by effective means of power and coercion must be referred to the authority and power of men in combination, for effecting that good they are directed to by the law of their moral nature, the consideration of which means of power itself is another branch of science, that of polity, and in that of jurisprudence and legislation, which are not entered upon here further than in reference to the governing or compulsory power constituted by men to effect the object of the law directing man to good, and for which purpose or object such governing authority and power are raised and established, and to which moral law, therefore, such must be in conformity with, to effect its purpose of good and to have the approbation of men.

THE MORAL LAW CONSIDERED PRACTICALLY AS TO "PROPERTY."

THE next consideration, and with which I intend closing the subject of the law of the human direction, or of the government of the mind directing men to good, is the possibility of effecting this good of men, and the means by which it can be realized to them, or maintained or secured ; seeing especially that that on which it is mainly dependent, namely, "property," is an exclusive privilege, or holding of the substance or the good in material things of this world, the produce of the earth, and

products of labour, and accumulated in some in deprivation of others, whose wants and necessities require what is taken and possessed by others, in that, of which "property" consists.

Let it be fully and distinctly understood and borne in mind, in our considerations of the practical good, that all human beings by the law of their moral nature have their direction to good; and in this law in their moral nature, and the direction it is to man, all have their right or authority for good; and that in considering the practicability of this, and whether it can be effected, and how it can be effected, we are considering whether this law is an efficient guide or authority that can be carried into effect; and that what it directs is practicable, or capable of accomplishment; and whether there are within the capacity of human discernment, modes and ways in which this law can be followed or obeyed, and its object of good can be effected: and whether, in truth, the being man does possess in his moral nature, a sound and effective means in his direction to good, as well as in his discernment as in his powers of practice for effecting or accomplishing that object; and that his powers of direction shall not be futile, but maintained by his capacities for their fulfilment of the object of the human direction of good.

Whether his powers of action for the attainment are in unity with the conception of his mind, in his direction to the object of his being or existence of his good, is the question here proposed.

Because if man cannot discern the rule or mode of practice for that object his mind conceives and directs him to, namely, his good, by moral or appropriate means of its accomplishment in virtue, regardful of man, rather than by evil means, by violence, force, fraud, or injustice ; or if the moral means do not direct him so sufficiently, that mankind can by their labour and exertions towards good accomplish that, rather than the evil, then his direction to the object is abortive in its efficacy ; and he has only an object pointed out to him, which his blindness, or his weakness, or incapacity of seeing how it can be accomplished, prevents him pursuing and obtaining it.

Then this direction man has to his good would be an empty and futile conception, however clear and explicit the law and rule man has for his direction, and the object of good, and desirous in conformity with that direction he is, or may be, to effect it. His purpose in his mind's conception would be fruitless then, if by human efforts, as far as he is an agent, it is not to be attained. Were this the case, it is an empty problem, however true and explicit in the order and rule it gives to perform that which is fruitless and futile in purpose. Man would be doomed to be the slave of man ; force alone would be rule and authority, and the machinations of man would be directed to his curse instead of the good and the design manifested in his nature. Human nature then would be a contradiction, a paradox, according to such means as we

have in our reasonable judgment to view and consider the subject of human nature.

This cannot be; but I state the case of the alternative, that we may truly value and esteem that nature manifested in man, and cherish, and regard, and revere that blessing in mind and reason, Providence has in his benevolence bestowed upon him, his creature man; but which he is to fulfil by his labour, in enquiry, research, and perseverance to execute.

It is in the trust and confidence I have in these powers, and in the faith and hope in Eternal God, that the Divine Power has not made man, and blessed him, and distinguished him above all other beings by the gift of reason in vain, that I do not hesitate to assert, if we will direct our attention to the investigation, the means are to be discovered, and are to be made manifest to the meanest capacity; and that his power in the discernment of his mind to effect his good is in unison with the direction of his mind to his good. But this must be by our own exertions, which is made manifest by giving men the powers they possess peculiarly distinguishing them.

It were to call in question that great blessing itself, if in the mind's direction it were not also the means of its fulfilment, and such would be the case if in the mind man could not see the mode of accomplishing the object of good in its own reasonable direction, that we learn when we have enquired into the power and means we have in it to direct us.

In "property" then, on which the good of man so mainly and efficiently depends, if this good which the rights of every man are his authority for in the law of his moral nature is not to be effected, it would defeat the end and object of its institution; and through it, the purposes of human direction, obtained in the power directing him, would be abortive, and in purpose the institution for any good would be a contradiction to itself. It would be absurd to say our object in life was good, which we are to pursue and obtain, and yet we could not see how that good was to be obtained; but could only see misery and wretchedness; and that in this main and chief institution of man, by which his being and existence is maintained, and can only be maintained and supported in society, and as civilized or moral beings.

In the course of this enquiry, the distinguishing of rights from their object, which from their connection had been confused and so mixed in the ideas of men in their considerations on moral subjects, that they were considered as one and the same thing, and the equality of the one was attached to the other, it has been shewn that the equality belonging to rights do not apply to their object in the good. Thus eliciting the practicability of good, which if considered on a principle of equality is impracticable.

Plain and simple as the truth and fact of this distinction, the not seeing it, or not regarding it if it has been seen, I think it will appear evident has been the practical cause why there has not been

that consideration and respect of man by man, conformably with their "duties," and which is requisite for their good as practicable.

In the admission of the claims of mankind to good, but making no distinction between the equality of their claim, (which appears alike in all,) and the good claimed, the claim appears to involve the equality of "property." A principle which all practical knowledge and experience in life men learn to be impracticable for any good or peace among men. They dread, therefore, the principle as supposed to exist, or as applicable to property.

The mind blind for want of enquiry upon the subject, the possessors of any substance are opposed to and are hardened against the claim or consideration in others, and all their reasonings and views, under these erroneous impressions, shew themselves in the workings of their thoughts and considerations upon this perplexed question of "property."

But had men been, or were men, undeceived upon the supposed principle of equality in property, by seeing the distinction between the rights of men and the object claimed of good, and that the equality in the one did not apply to the other ; and that then so considering the subject of property, the claim of men to good applied to a limit or measure of consideration only, out of that of which property consisted ; and that likewise with a knowledge of the base or reasoning upon which all property is constituted and justified, namely, for good—and

that such measure for any good is the subject of the rule and regulation of the laws, mankind would view with calmness and resignation, and in good disposed minds with satisfaction, the claim on their property to a limited or measured extent wholesomely regulated by the power of conventional or civil law, although viewing a claim which threatened devastation and destruction in a principle of equality as applied to "property" could not be tolerated, or even the contemplation endured with any patience, so, apparently in practical knowledge only, destructive of all good, and all peace, security, and happiness of society, under the mistaken notion of the principle of equality applied to "property."

This difficulty in the way of the moral consideration of "property," I trust is now overcome by the distinction alluded to being pointed out, and will no longer stand in the way as an obstacle to the effecting of good to mankind, notwithstanding the exclusive nature in a measure of the institution of property; and may we not hope that the same appliances of the human mind, if it has been successful in tracing out the great law and rule of human action in his direction to good, may likewise be successful for his direction in that which is so essential for the accomplishing good as property, and which no social state of man could exist without establishing.

In truth, if we have been successful in pointing out the law of our direction to good, may we not hope that what is subservient to the law shall also

be found to be alike capable of being seen, and that the rule of action to compass that good can also be pointed out. And by using due diligence, to accomplish the seeing how the good of all is to be effected through the institution of property, of necessity a measure for the general good, at first apparently by its privileges and exclusive nature opposed to the practicability of affording good to every one in correspondence with their rights, which entitle every man to some good to be proceeding from it.

Property as such main and chief means by which this object of good, the law of our nature, directs us to can be effected or promoted, I purpose enquiring into the nature and principles of the institution, or the reasons on which it is founded and maintained; and likewise to direct the attention to the points and questions which arise for our consideration in regard to it, that will present themselves in this enquiry, that the difficulties or perplexities of apparent anomaly with the institution and its object may be met, and explained, and reconciled to our understandings or our reasonable judgment. Principally and chiefly in these difficulties is that apparent great anomaly, and on which most if not all the other questions arise or depend, of the power and privilege given to the owner or possessor of property over it, and to the exclusion of others, or all others in a degree, and yet a claim of all being reserved in it, and power and right of interference, control, and exercise of that right

over it, for the purposes of the institution in effecting good.

In the reviewing of what has been done, I have no apprehension but in pursuing the enquiry relative to the nature and institution of property, that in what is so constituted, the right of all to their good will be found to be effective in practice, however various the nature, the degree, or the inequality; and that this shall be so apparent in justice, however men may wish, or however they may be striving in fairness and honesty to improve their stations in life, that no reasonable complaint shall be made of enduring wrong or injury, either to those possessing property or those destitute, that might otherwise be avoided did the institution of it not exist.

Let us now proceed to the enquiry into the nature of property, and see what views or facts the subject affords to guide us, by which the right of all men to good can be recognised in that institution in some mode or degree, to meet the object of such recognition.

The good in property is in the benefit resulting by the appropriation of things, without which his sustenance could not be procured in the most simple or most primitive state of man, or in the most rude or wildest form of human existence in the wilderness, or in the wild or savage state of man; and as man progressed and formed into settled states and societies, became cultivated in intellect, manners, and in habits, the division of lands, to avoid confusion, dispute, and contest,

would be a result. The increase as well as the accumulation of things made by art, skill, and contrivances, the produce of cultivation, herds, and flocks, would also be a consequence; and such would be considered to belong to the possessor who had acquired these by labour, art, industry, or gift, likewise to avoid dispute or contest. And in the productions such separate control or dominion would create, would be found employment and provision for the many, neither of which, namely, the productions of the earth, and of the useful animals and fruits, and of human labour, art, or ingenuity, or the numbers of human beings, would or could be brought into existence without such means as the establishing property would afford to raise, and when raised, to sustain.

Institution of property for good. The enquiry here contemplated as to property for good, concerns the moral authority

for it, or the foundation or establishment of it by the law which man has to direct him, and which, according to that law of his moral nature, is to good; and therefore for this purpose, according to such law, the institution by him of property is for good, and which, therefore, must be considered as the object to be obtained in property.

General view or position of the case or subject of property. Property, as a matter all mankind recognise, and the human race cannot endure and flourish without it, we can only consider in reason as good; and the benefit or good resulting to men from it, is the occasion for their approving of it, and is the moral

authority for it in the law directing them to good, and is the right men have to it, and men are sanctioned in its adoption for such good in it according to this law, in the peculiar or moral nature of man directing him to good.

If it were otherwise, and property were not a good, then should every thing be left to a state of nature, wild, unreclaimed, and uncultivated, all arts and science, and human skill, aggrandizement, and splendour abandoned, and men take where and when, and as they liked. This, evidently absurd, could not be, nor could the idea be tolerated for a moment with reasonable, and civilized, and enlightened man. But since man ever has and will congregate, and is a social being, and will form into society, property must and will necessarily arise or result ; and we are now in fact considering the rules or modes of effecting good in a social state of man, since such ever has, and we may presume ever will exist, and is morally justified for the good in it, what are the rules and modes, or minor laws, man has to direct him to accomplish the greater law of his direction to good, that we may pursue it validly and effectively.

As in its nature or institution it precludes of possession some in favour of those possessed of it, such are precluded from the benefit of that of which it consists ; as to those not possessed of it, or to whom it does not belong, the good may be called in question, or may be considered as only so, to those possessed of it ; but therefore property, it may

be supposed, is not good as to those to whom it does not belong ; and the consideration of men may be supposed not to be maintained in the establishment of it, as to those who are excluded from the good which is possessed by others in that which is property.

It is, however, apparent that the good of mankind mainly and principally exists in property, and is brought to pass by it ; and the good which can be otherwise rendered to man, comparatively little of importance to the great good effected by property, is only by the personal actions of men towards one another in what may help or assist them in their undertakings or personal labours, and in what will avoid their hurt or injury.

But if good is to be rendered by things in substance, as in food, or clothing, or habitation, or in granting or admitting to each other their participations in land, or in employ and in labour on it, and its various produce, directly and indirectly, and for the multifarious employment it gives, this, the greater good, is only to be effected by "property."

It is in "property" that, being raised and established, the main and chief good exists, which is, or can be, realized to men ; and from no other source or means is it that the good of men can be compassed or effected by moral or human efforts and arts so largely and universally as by "property ;" and the establishment or institution of property is apparent in a general view as of general concern to mankind, as good. It is in the insti-

tution of it that the greatest inequality of good occurs and is witnessed ; but, notwithstanding, it is the chief and main source of the greatest of all moral good to man or compassable by human means.

In a matter, then, of such great and universal and common necessity for the good of man, as property, however unequal, and however destitute as those may be not possessed of any substance yielding produce ; yet can it be supposed that the good of the thousands and millions which depend for their lives and subsistence on the existence of property, that the dispensations of it to meet the rights of men to their good is not maintained and justified for good for which it is instituted ?

If it were otherwise, where is the authority for the establishment of it, or the respect or consideration of it, or of men in what is their property ; for if it is not of good to the mass of mankind the good of the few in possession can have no moral justification in it, and the demand of the respect of it by the many as good to the many, in such case ceases.

But, in truth, what is property abstractedly viewed ? Is it more than the practical means by which man converts to good the earth and all its produce, and the emanations from that produce, for the service or benefit of those who live and subsist through such means or produce raised and brought into creation by it ?

The great feature and object of it, then, practically, it is most obviously apparent, is good ; there

is no denying this, and without this sanction for its foundation, in the approval of it for good, and that direction by the law of human nature to good, it cannot be maintained or justified, and no respect or consideration would exist or be morally sanctioned, nor would the duty of man exist, but in this moral law in such sanction of his direction to regard or respect property or men in their possessions, for the good which they are by such law directed to regard property, and by the same law in reason for the purpose of accomplishing that good for which it is instituted.

We have therefore to consider by what mode or rule good, as the object of establishing property or such institution, is to be effected to meet the rights of all to good.

The moral authority on which the
The conven-
tionary nature institution of property rests, and which
of property is the sanction it has in human means
considered.

in the power directing and governing
man of his mind, *does not make* or give property
to men; however that which is property may be
approved, and the institution or measure may be
approved, and for the benefit and good resulting
from such institution.

The privilege of the individual owner or proprie-
tator to whom property belongs, in power, and
control, and dominion over it, and to the exclusion
of others, cannot arise or be given by that indi-
vidual's authority either in the law directing him
to good or his approbation; neither his approbation

nor his power can say it is his, or vest it in him, and exclude others, as others would have the same claim or pretext and no more nor less than the possessor.

For this power allowed, admitted, or recognised, in the owner or proprietor, the consent or admission of others is required, or such might take it, and interfere with him, and interrupt him in the use, management, and enjoyment of it ; and hence arises the conventional nature of property in the assent or agreement of men, either declared or implied.

The privilege in the owner or proprietor is therefore resting or depending on the admission or consent of others ; and hence arises, and is seen, the conventional nature of property as well as its sanction in the moral approval, in the law of the moral nature of man of reason directing him to good. And that it rests also on, or is dependent on, the assent or agreement of men, of all who form, we must morally assume, the society, state, or community where it exists or is established, or the institution is recognised.

Before we proceed further, then, let us consider of what property consists.

Property, or what we mean by that term, consists of the appropriation of things, be it land, its produce whatever it may be, or animated beings, and inanimate things of nature, or the products of art, manufacture, and human invention or fabric, and over which power, control, or dominion is vested in the owner or proprietor, or those to whom it is

considered to belong, and to the exclusion of others; but it must be understood that such power of the owner and exclusion of others, cannot be considered absolute, but only in a degree. The foundation of its establishment on the moral law, as also by the conventional nature of it, and by its being subservient to the laws of the land or state, shew that it is the subject of rule and control.

Our comprehensions on property may be difficult at first to us all, in the first impressions or knowledge we acquire of it in early life, habituated to consider it under laws and practical habits and customs in regard to it; but if we will bear in mind these two facts concerning it, of its moral authority and object in that of good, and of its conventional institution for the same object, it will greatly facilitate our understanding its nature, and reconcile us to the result we arrive at, and to the consequences to which these two facts lead us.

In the contemplation of property, all men in enjoyment of it are engrossed by the comfort and security it holds forth to them, and consequently deprecate any interferences with it, and view with jealousy and alarm all molestation and claims of others to meddle with, or take any part of it. Yet if people will reflect one instant, they must see in its very institution it is the subject of human interference in laws, modes, customs, rules, and regulations, and moreover is the subject of charge for the good of all the state in taxes, levies, imposts, and other dues and charges to which it is made subservient, and for the good and benefit of the

subjects of the state in the protection afforded by the governments of such states, and the laws to effect the general good and welfare.

It does not much signify how property has arisen, or the various forms it takes or assumes, for the consideration here intended to be given relative to its object of good ; and the right over it possessed by the law in its conventional nature, to effect and apply it to such object of its moral base or authority, on which alone can it have solid foundation for respect or consideration with man ; and on which respect and consideration can it exist, or be supported and maintained, or laws be justified in maintaining it.

It has been considered by some moral writers very requisite to enter into the origination of property, by what means, or at what time, it has been originally established, formed, or instituted, and the authority for sanctioning it ; and various speculations have been given on the subject. We need only refer to our own Locke and Blackstone, and, lastly, our Paley, and who all quote other writers upon the subject, and we might refer to Virgil. The particular origination of its establishment is evidently sought for, to explain how the individual right can arise to that which apparently is open and common to all, as nature apparently is. As in considering property* it occurs to all that the

* People are constantly mistaking the acquirement for the rule that constitutes property :—the constituting it, is the consent of society ; the acquirement, the labour or other means by which a man becomes possessed of that of which the property consists.

earth and produce of the earth, viewed as the common habitation of man, is open to all, one man as much as another, as well as all contained in the earth within the reach and power and convertible to the use of man. But it is not, I think, of essential importance, however ingenious, learned, and in many respects true it may be, in regard to the ground or reason assigned.

It is the sanction for it with man that we are looking for, and which must have been practically the sanction at all times, however not unravelled or understood to be capable of explanation, although its advantages, the real ground for it, was practically felt and acknowledged by all mankind wherever it existed.

We are looking for its establishment or sanction in the human judgment, and to explain to and satisfy men of its authority and sanction by the means or power man has to direct him of his mind, and the direction he has in that means or nature, and by which he is directed to good.

However important or useful the inquiry may be as to the origination of property, the looking to the past will hardly justify the present existence of it, unless the establishment can be shewn to be justified and maintained on sound principles, and in conformity with that law man has for his direction. We are seeking here the principles on which it is founded and justified ; and whatever may have been its origination, we can only look at property as it exists in any government, state, nation, or society ;

and it is evident, in whatever the original power or authority consisted, it now exists by the consent and concurrence or adhesion of the people where it is to its present existence; or by the government as representing the people, or consent of the nation directing or controlling and regulating such people.

It is very possible the origination of it, in many instances, may have been the result of power and conquest, and in some cases even of violence, and of the grossest and basest cruelties and injustice; but this, we submit, can have nothing to do with the consideration here proposed of the authority or principles for its foundation, or those laws which man has to guide and direct him of his moral nature when seen and understood.

Whatever form property has assumed, and now appears in, it exists only on the consent of the present generations, and their adhesions to the laws of the country where it is, implied or declared, and that the purpose of its constitution in the law directing man is for good.

Further observations on property relative to the good, and the consequent effect producing the estimations of virtue and vice, or justification or crime in relation to it.

That the institution is manifestly the main and chief means of effecting human good, and in the subsistence of men, I will next proceed to such further considerations of the subject of the institution of property, its object in good, the estimations arising in that of respect and virtue, and offence and crime in relation to it, nevertheless keeping in view the object and pur-

pose of it for good, in conformity with the law of the moral nature directing man to that object. I will make these farther observations on the subject of property, as most essential to the conducing of the good and benefit of mankind in the most extended view we can take of that good, accomplishable by any efforts or measures of man, or human or moral institutions; for the purpose of shewing the fact of this good being entirely or wholly that of society in the object of the institution of property, through the intervention of owners or proprietors, not for their particular good, but as a means of effecting the good of society: and I hope to exhibit this in a way that no one in reason can doubt it, should what we have already said, and given, of a knowledge of its true nature, object, or purpose, not have convinced men of this real base or ground on which the institution is founded, and can be maintained and supported.

It has been observed that the purpose of good is the object for which property is established, and a good, or service, or benefit to man that can only be produced or effected to mankind in a state of society, and for which the institution is indispensably necessary, ad that such necessity for good is in the increased produce, and the employ and sustentation of the numbers of society it affords, which can only be produced and maintained through the means of the institution; and this is brought to pass by the interest and encouragement given to the proprietor to work, and manage, and improve that in which it

consists, by such means to render the increase, to give greater employ, and to render in greater abundance the means of sustenance to society.

To shew that the object of this good, being that of society, is wholly and entirely the sanction of the institution, and that it is in this object that the measure receives sanction, and on no other ground or account, let us look at the mere act of taking any good or benefit in what property may consist of, in substance, matter, or things, be it land, or stock, or goods, or wares, or merchandize, or money. The naked act of taking such good is the same, whether in the proprietor or lawful possessor, or by him not the owner, but taking his good or benefit in the supply of his wants and necessities out of that which is property. Which of these takes the good, be it him that is the owner, or him not the owner, excludes or deprives the other.

The naked act alone of taking such good, is the same, whether it be by the owner or him not the owner; neither does it signify, but for the consequences, the relations which connect "property" with society, whether it is the owner or despoiler who has the benefit or takes such good.

But it is in this relation which property bears to society for the good of that state, that constitutes the act or measure of taking the good in the one case, that of the owner or proprietor being justified, and the institution a justificatory measure, and the contrary the act of him not the owner taking that good in property from the owner, not justifi-

able, because such act defeats, disturbs, despoils, and destroys it; and defeats and destroys in that, the good in the measure resulting to society.

It is in this relation which property bears to society, and the further or greater good in the institution beyond that derived to the owner, namely, that of society or the state, that it is justified for good by the increase into life and sustentation of life of the nations and millions, that could not be brought into existence or sustained without it, that is the cause of the institution being justified, and the offence to it being condemned.

This good resulting in property is the base of it in reason, and the sanction of it, and man's justification in it, in the direction we have in the law of the moral nature of reason directing man to good; and in the good that is to be had by the institution of property.

The good in that of which property consists, whether it were that of the owner or possessor, or another who would take it from him, is only of equal concern for the good of either; but as the measure or the institution of property concerns or bears relation to the society, and the good of the human race at large, in increase of sustenance and maintenance of the millions and of generations, is it of the first and greatest benefit, and the means of benefit to man. Hence is its justification, and the great crime of offence to it.

But we are to bear in mind its object and purpose in good, and that this good, the good of

society, the general good, is that to be worked and effected by man ; and the institution of the measure is not to be made a means of defeating its object by excluding the general good, or regarding only the owners or possessors in their possessions, and to the exclusion of those to be benefited by the institution, and for whose good it is based and held respected, namely, that of society, or the people wherever it may be.

Therefore we must look to, and view property as a measure connected with society, its various relations, and the laws by which it can be wholesomely sustained, or for the benefit or good of man ; and as it can be maintained and preserved in society, managed, and regulated, and as a subject subservient to, and for the interest of the state at large.

The institution of "property" itself is a measure of necessity for good, the general good, that of mankind generally in the state, country, nation, nay, the whole world, wherever it may be ; but let us, for more definite understanding of it, confine our view of it to the state or nation where it may be, or any given locality of its institution.

It is an institution of necessity for the general good, and we may further remark that general good can never be comprehended in, or understood to be, merely that of the possessors, but the possessors and those dependent on the means of property for support, in distribution, by employ, labour, arts, trade, and commerce ; and not those of present times or a day only, but those rising up, now, and

for ever in succession, and to generations succeeding each other in the course of nature. But in this general good, for the necessity of which property is the maintenance and means, as dependent on man, and resting on the moral means ; the good, comparatively, only of the few possessors never can be considered that general good for which the necessity sanctions the institution, but it is the good of the mass, the whole, not one or more, a few, or many, to the exclusion of the few, or a portion, as that would be unjust. It is the good of the mass, the whole society, and of every one in that society, or injustice would attach to the principle, which must be held to be the subject of that general good meant, the necessity for which the institution of "property" arises, and upon which for the practical good, and knowledge of that good, felt or seen by experience, or practically acquainted with it, it has ever been, and must ever continue to be, adopted, supported, and maintained. The necessity of the institution of property for good therefore it is, that justifies the privilege and power given to the owner or possessor, and to the exclusion, in a measure, of those not in possession, but yet drawing their support and sustenance from it in its dispersion through labour, arts, trade and commerce.

It is this necessity which justifies and sanctions the institution, and the rules and laws, and observances of respect and consideration by those not the possessors ; and the offence to which is accounted

as crime, as defeating or destroying it, and thence defeating or destroying the good resulting from it to the mass of society, and for the offence and crime the most severe interdicts and punishments have been assigned at all times; and for the preservation of property, therefore, laws have extended this protection in the condemnation of such crimes and offences, and imposed the heaviest penalties: and without the existence of such institution as property, no people could ever rise into nations, or any state to civilization; but mankind must remain as savages and wild inhabitants of deserts and wildernesses, and of little more account, except for moral considerations, than the wild creatures dependent on the like casualties of nature for their existence.

Let us call the attention to the fact, that it is on the sole necessity of good the institution of property is justified and maintainable, by which one portion of society has a privilege and power given them over that which is property, and to the exclusion, in a measure, of others who are required to give up and relinquish their good in it, except in certain modes and ways, and to restrict and limit themselves in their conduct and actions, to respect and consider that which is property; and offending against this respect constitutes the heaviest crimes and offences of men, in theft, fraud, robbery, and dishonesty, and brings down the severest inflictions of the laws and punishment, and the heaviest disgrace upon the character of man.

The utility of moral enquiry is seen here, in arriving at the simplest and plainest facts or truths of the relation which property bears to the society, in the necessity of it for the good of society, and the benefit that alone is the result of such measure in providing the means of raising and sustaining the members composing it. In which institution are seen the two great and distinct characters of good and evil, displayed in man and society. In the one instance, of the respect and regard of property in the just, the honest, the laborious and industrious, living in peace, order, comfort, and happiness, of benefit to their fellow creatures in the promoting the increase and produce of property, and aiding and dispersing the good among society; and in the other instance, of those members of the society who disregard the rules of respect of property, defy or evade the laws, and live in system or league to commit offences against property, by theft, pilfering, fraud, or more open defiance of the laws in depredation and robbery on the property of others, and often accompanied with personal violence; such are the great distinctions in practical life as regards men's actions concerning property.

In the practical effect of the institution we see the greatest contrast, and of the highest importance and consideration of the human character in the just, the honest, the industrious, and laborious; and the opposite of the unjust, the fraudulent, the thief, the robber, the idle, profligate, lazy, and dis-

solute. So that we see from these perceptions of the human mind, or moral faculties of man in relation to property of his actions and proceedings, and which he sees and learns by enquiry, and gains as the true source of sanction on the one hand in what is of good, and condemnation on the other in what is of evil, for his direction, flow all the estimations of the good and evil in regard to property in practical life, and become marked and distinguished in the actions and transactions of men by the plainest and most distinct characters.

By this enquiry we are afforded the plainest rules for our direction, and which are the same as those practically learnt and seen by all men, but confirmed and explained to us by science in the knowledge of the law of our direction to good, and the measure requisite for that in property, and the nature and principles of the institution, and what is requisite to be observed respecting it. We have here explained in what consists the moral turpitude and crime of offences against property, in theft, robbery, fraud, and dishonesty, by destroying or defeating its purpose in the security and preservation of it, by which the greatest and chief good to society is effected, and consequently those acts of offence to it are of the greatest mischief and evil to society, and to the good and welfare of men in it. Exemplifying in these estimations of virtue in the one course of human actions, and of vice and crime in the other, as concerns property, the practical

working of the law directing man without the knowledge of the principle of good, which science of the subject of morals displays to us.

But we learn, above all, in the institution of property, the fact of it being constituted for the good that is resulting from it, the great good to mankind generally. That the good arising in property is not denied, but, on the contrary, it is the avowed object in the instituting it, and for which object the heaviest inflictions are adjudged for the invading it, or breach of respect and regard to it, which would defeat and destroy the good to be raised, dispersed, and distributed to society in its institution; and that good is by affording employ and in taking it out in the interchange of labour, art, trade, and commerce, and other acts of service and assistance rendered by man to man. This good, so obtained, is in the ordinary, the common mode practically that men are acquainted with in property, and the good found and practically known in society.

But hence we are to consider that good is the object of the institution of property. That it stands and is based on no other ground. But the good failing in the ordinary and common modes practically of obtaining that good, and by which it is commonly known, of employ, labour, art, trade, or commerce, is the object of that good to be lost sight of?

The object of Good is the object of the institution
good in the of property, on which the measure of

institution of property failing in the ordinary modes of dispensing such good, measures of policy for effecting the object is the consideration of government and law.

after.

privilege and exclusion in a degree is given to the owner or proprietor, and without this it has not a base to rest on ; and this good failing in the ordinary or common modes of recipiency of it, in the employ it gives, or in labour, art, trade, and commerce, can we suppose in reason that the good is to be lost sight of, and is not be sought

The good failing, directed by reason to good, we are to draw that good by other wholesome means for the institution, than the interchange of employ, labour, art, trade, or commerce ; those modes failing, or failing in sufficient means for the good of the society, and from the source from which the good is to flow in creating the institution, and these other means are necessarily, by charges on it, to meet the object of good.

To carry into effect the moral law man has in his nature, government and civil and conventional law are instituted by society ; and to governments must we look to carry into effect the good contemplated, and on which property is founded, when it fails to flow in the ordinary modes.

The advantage we derive from this enquiry is, we arrive at the real ground for the sanction of property in the object of the moral good—and that good the indisputable good of the whole people ;—and if that object is not yielded in the ordinary course of labour, art, trade, or commerce,

yet good as the object is not be defeated, but is to be carried into effect by the government and laws, as the good and care of the society, and the subjects of it are the especial object of creating such powers and authority to effect the good.

This is the course directed by the law directing man to good of his moral nature, and the means of effecting that law, where the authority of power, and its means in laws and measures of policy are required for that purpose.

The claims of society on property shewn and considered.

To exhibit the claims of society on property it will be proper further to consider the subject of the institution of property. The object or purpose of property is for the good in or resulting from it; this is the purpose or object in it, and for which it receives the sanction, authority, or justification of the moral means or power directing man. But we have seen this gives no power or right, as before noticed, in the individual to the things of which property consists and to the exclusion of others. For this individual power over property, and exclusion of others, the assent of the others composing the state, the society, or nation where property is instituted, it is apparent, must be required or needed.

As before has been observed, the right of man to good cannot, and does not, give him property, or that power over things of which it consists, and to the exclusion of others, because the same right be-

longs to all, and all having the same right to good, all would claim equally and alike ; and there could be no privilege or particular right in one more than in another to such things, as land, its products, the animals, the fruits, or the produce of human art, labour, or ingenuity, or skill ; for rights being equal in all, one man would have precisely the same rights as another to these things, and for the good in them as another.

All would in fact be equally entitled by the same authority, and the community of interests would result, and this, practically, would be directly contrary and opposed to ownership or proprietorship to the exclusion of others, and the good resulting from the establishing property would be defeated or could not exist, which good results through the encouragement to labour, cultivation, and improvement, and through such means disperses good to the society. But without appropriation, all interfering one with another would raise contest and dissension, and instead of good resulting from the interference of all with the land, its products, and the produce of human labour, and by the community of interests, and community of good, of necessity the consequence, there would be less good and more evil in dispute and contest.

It being evident that the assent of the society must be and is given to the establishing of the power over things constituting property, and in exclusion of others, it is apparent that property, as

well depending on the moral approbation as its authority for the good, as well depends on the general assent of those composing the state or society where it is, and it is therefore a matter of convention or agreement of men to its institution, and for the moral purpose of the good resulting to man in its establishment.

Under this *view* of the consent implied or declared, is seen the claim and authority of the whole society over that of which property is constituted; the right and claim of the community is seen to exist over it, and for the object of the good of society through the good of the individuals the possessors of property composing the state, or nation, or people.

Governments and laws are the authority of the state or society constituted for the good of the community or society, by effective means to promote and maintain the good of the society, and the authority of the law its power and control extends over that of which property consists for that good, the object for which property is constituted, and for the good of the society or people over which governments and laws rule and are the conventional authority of men.

The existence of the conventional nature of property is implied by the fact itself of the institution, and having the sanction of laws. The laws themselves may be, and are frequently, declaratory of that which is constituted or held to be property, and to the laws the mass of society must

be considered as generally consenting, and that they are binding on the whole community.

To establish the privilege in property which is conferred on the owner or proprietor, it is evident the immediate good which others might derive from that of which it consists is conceded in the consent of the society to it ; but it must be borne in mind, the good, in a measure only, is conceded, and the right in the claim of society on property for good is the base and ground of its institution. The concession, however, at all times is through the adherence of the existing members of the society or in the present generations ; and property is therefore dependent on their consent.

It is the present generations who are to draw their good from the institution in the way it can be circulated by labour, employment, trades, arts and commerce, and it cannot be supposed that the present members of society, or the government and laws representing society, on whose consent the institution depends, do consent on any other ground, and concede their immediate good, but for the good to be supplied or drawn by such ordinary or legitimate means from it of labour, employment or trade.

Do we, the existing members or present generation, adopt the establishment or institution, or abide the rules or laws we find existing, but for such good to be returned through the legitimate courses or channels of the interchanges of society ? And here is the good seen to be received, by being the motive

for the adoption of or adherence to the institution.

Should, then, good not be obtainable by the ordinary sources of employment, labour, trade, arts or commerce, or other means of distribution, the state or governments, and such authorities having the voice of the society, and the control and power to provide for the object of the institution, have it in duty, as the object of their being constituted, to provide by artificial means or wholesome rules and laws that shall not defeat the general good in the institution, or be as little detrimental as practicable, that distribution which circumstances check, or the institution fails to produce through the ordinary channels, and to meet the right all have to their good.

It is proper and useful to draw the attention to the fact that the concession made by society in their consent to property, is only of the immediate good in the subject matter of property, and that it is not the right of man to good that is conceded, in an absolute meaning of such concession. Indeed this cannot be, because the right is proceeding from a fixed law in the moral constitution of man, and which we have seen is a certain and fixed law directing him to good, and therefore this never can be extinguished or obliterated while man exists with mind and reason to direct him to his good, as that which in reason for man he can only approve. It is in the law of human nature, which never can be destroyed while man himself exists.

Right again referred to, as arising or existing in the moral nature, indelible as the ground of consideration of men in their good.

The right of man to his good is an indelible matter in human nature, that can never be eradicated or destroyed but with the being, with whom it is in the law of his nature constituting him a moral agent. And it has only not been seen, or known or sufficiently so to be understood and valued, as before observed, for want of enquiry into his nature, to enable him to see and explain what the law is in that nature to direct him. Yet, practically, though unable to explain, man has always felt the influence of that operating in him in his general approbation of good, and adopting it in his higher estimations and as the preferable to the contrary or evil. It is, however, a law in his nature, really existing in his reason, which is his direction and his authority for good, and the authority of property for that good, but seen, he can no longer doubt its truth, its reality, or its existence, and he can no longer doubt his law for his direction, or that it is other than to good, and on that ground sanctions the institution of property.

The right of man, therefore, always exists to good: and here it may be observed, it would be a most strange and inconsistent thing with the right of men, if the concession of property did not infer the object of that right was to be met or provided for in some way or other; and, therefore, that their good is not to be defeated, although not placed otherwise than to be derived through the interven-

tion of the institution, and wholesome laws or regulations to effect the object for which such institution is founded.

The right of society witnessed, again noticed, in the charges and taxations on property for the general good.

There is nothing in the right of man to good, and the reserve of good in the concession required for property to defeat the object of the institution, for that is the very end and object of it, namely, good. It is for the general

good, that of society, property is necessary for, and is instituted, that is, therefore, always understood, and that is always witnessed in the laws, rules and regulations concerning it, however failing in their object and in exactions, taxations, levies, dues and imposts for the state or government; and it is in this general good we see the good of the society at large reserved and practically exemplified; and if the society, besides, did not draw good in employ, labour, agriculture, arts, trade or commerce or the interchanges of society, it is only reasonable, and it is only in aid and effect of its object, to provide and substitute other means by which the good can be drawn from it, and the right of every member of the state to good met and provided for.

The rules or principles as to property noticed, which have been obtained by enquiry.

I have before called the attention to the inquiring for rules or principles for the direction, in the institution of property; and that may afford the good which at first, in the nature of the institution, in the power it gives the owner, and

its exclusiveness, appears to oppose that good.—The principle of it is that of good, and on no other ground can it be reasonably justified to moral and considerate man. It has been shewn that men cannot extinguish their right, which is a matter indelible in their nature, and which has only not been known for want of explaining such law, by due enquiry and examination of their nature, but which is perfectly clear and evident in the law of his moral nature of reason, which can only approve his good, and by that law having the direction to good, and which has influenced, and always must influence, man, though unseen, and for want of being seen has not been valued and esteemed by man as it must be when seen, and which it now is, enquired of and treated as a matter of science.

The establishment or institution of property is for this good which the law of his nature directs man to, and is his sanction and authority for it.

The right of man we have, therefore, for his authority for good, and we have then exhibited to us in the practical consideration of this law of our moral nature the institution of property as the most efficient means of effecting or compassing the good generally of men, and this good is to be provided from the institution as the obvious purpose of it to the subjects composing the society, state or people where it is.

Having fully exhibited the nature of property not to be taken in common, and the claim of the whole state or

qualification of society on it for good, it will be necessary to consider the subject in regard to its nature, or the institution of property, not meaning or applying to considered. good in common. It is therefore proper to notice, that although property is constituted for the common or general good of the society, that in property men cannot take their good in common.

The institution is a measure to preclude this; the very nature of the institution being the power given to the owner, and in the exclusion, or exclusion in a degree, of all others for the purpose, as before observed, of encouragement of art, labour, and industry bestowed upon that of which it consists for its increase and improvement, and by such means rendering its greater usefulness, and for the greater good of the welfare of society, than land and other subjects of it, being unappropriated, would produce, or by the face of nature lying in waste and wilderness, or ruthless and uncultivated. In my former work, "Of the Government of the Mind," in making observations on good in common, I have noticed to the effect that, that is not to be understood by the poor, "in advocating their cause, that because land, or its products, and every thing else of which property may consist, whether the product of art, labour, or industry of man bestowed upon it, or not, unless property is constituted in it, is open, common, or free to every one, to help himself and take as he likes; and that thus the poor, as a

portion of the society, are consenting to the measure or institution of property in things, and in the object of that convention, having a claim on it, in the implied good of it for society, that they are therefore entitled or authorized to go and help themselves ; or that it is in their or any others option, to resort to effect their right to good in common, which without convention exists over all things. Because the measure of convention constituting property, both in principle and practice, for their own good and the general good is opposed to that. And the evidence, in shewing the convention of men to the institution of property, of their right to their good, and that good through the medium of property, shews the impracticability of effecting their good, in good in common ; which good, but for property raised to exclude the good in common, cannot be effected. And the convention itself is an implied agreement or understanding of men, admitting or agreeing to that, which shall be considered property by the prohibition of such common interference, as a necessary measure to raise or reap the benefit generally, by the improvements and increase of produce rendered by establishing property in things. And the laws are made and promulgated in all states or governments for the promoting and security of property, for those benefits resulting from it, which cannot be obtained in good in common ; and which necessarily all the subjects of such states, are required to obey for the good of the whole society ; and the disobedience of which are

amongst the greatest offences of men, as disturbing and defeating that great good, in that order, law, and state of things, which preserves and secures property, and the general good in that.

" But I have used the argument to trace and shew that in the measures of men, from that first step or original measure of convention, and the object in that step, for constituting property for such good ; that as the society are implied as subscribing to it, they have all an original claim or authority over it ; and that the measure taken of the institution of property, having for its object the good of society, all have an implied or reserved claim in that good, or to be benefited by that measure : and which if not received in the ordinary modes of distribution, of labour, trade, commerce, or other means of employment, then the high authority of the government, or legislature, which gives or regulates the laws of the state concerning it, for its promotion, security, maintenance, and better regulation of it, for the object of society at large ; and such government, as exercising the authority of the whole people in a considerate and orderly manner for the whole society, has, the government has, the claim of all in the state, and the poor as part of the subjects of that state, to regard and provide for their good, where necessity requires it, and it cannot be obtained in any other legitimate mode.

" The argument therefore as applied to the poor, is to shew their claim to their good ; but the law is the only means by which it can be provided them,

when the means or sources through which they would, in the ordinary channels it is derived or flows in society, of labour, art, or trade, commerce or other means of employment obtain good, cease to afford it. And to shew that they have a claim to their good, that it is the duty of governments, or the laws to provide it for them, where destitute, or the sources fail in the ordinary course of society to yield it; and that they can justly therefore call for it, and that it is unjust to deny it to them."

We may here advert to the common nature of right. Right is common to all mankind, and the object of such right to good, is also common in all mankind. Right is common to all mankind, because the right is in the law of the moral nature all have or possess, and is the authority of all for good. We are not, however, to mistake our common rights to good, for having that good in common in the institution of property, for good in common is not applicable to property, but in particular cases, or under special circumstances; and it is not applicable because not practicable for the object of it, and the general good, on which the institution of property is founded. Good in common is not, therefore, applicable as a general rule in property, but only applicable in particular cases. And we will here draw the attention to the meaning and application of the word "common," as well as to the alliteration of the terms of common right and common good, not meaning or being the same with good in common. The terms in our language run very much alike,

but they have very different meanings in their application, and which we should remember and keep distinct, and therefore do I think it very useful to notice the *alliteration*, or likeness in terms, which may, unless the difference is noticed, be very apt to mislead and draw men into confusion and mistake.

Right is common because it belongs to all, and is the same, or similar in all, and is the title or authority of all to their good.

The term "common," applied to what is of general good, is a good in common all partake in, being within the power, compass, or means of taking and enjoying, as the earth, the waters, fine weather, abundance of crops and produce, and whatever is generally useful, all are generally benefited in, and as they can partake of them, the general good is open and common to all to benefit, by obtaining legitimately, or by practical means for good when, and as they can, and may. So are governments and laws of general good, and all participate in the common good of them ; and so is property of common good in the institution of it as of general good.

But good in common means or is applied to all taking equally and alike, one the same as another, in any particular subject or thing that is good,—a house, a field, its produce, the labours and industry of others, stock in trade, money,—and that all shall take these things, use them, share them, do with as they will and please, alike. This is good in common, and this, we have before observed, is impracticable for good in property, and this would defeat

the end and object of property, and the great and general good through the means of such institution.

We may exemplify the case in those things that are of common use, but from which special or particular good may be derived, and in which the good in common ceases ; we may take the case of public waters or hunting grounds in unreclaimed lands and countries lying wild and open to all. The open waters and the hunting grounds are common to all, and all may take their good in common, but the good the individuals derive from these become a special good, and to take the fish, or game, or stores procured by the industry of the individuals in common afterwards, would defeat the ends or objects of good in the labour bestowed in procuring them. This latter would be the special term in reference to the good in common, and would be impracticable for good as defeating the object for which such things were procured, as rewarding the procurer for his pains and labour for his own use, or in bringing them to market for the use and service of others who reward him in barter or exchange, and therefore good in common to be applied here is impracticable for the institution of property.

In the distinction shewn of right, and the object of it in good, that right is equal, but that good is not, and cannot be so, but will be various in quantity, quality, and degree, it is pointed out that good in common is not practicable or of practicable attainment for property.

The meaning, therefore, applied to good in com-

mon in the objectionable sense, is where not practicable for good. This, it is evident, is impracticable in cases where contest and dissension would arise, and the measure would defeat itself in mischief and evil; and as to property, the chief and greatest means of effecting human good, the means by which its benefit is compassed or brought to pass by labour, art, and improvement, would be prevented, if the owner was not protected, so that he could pursue his culture, or his manufacture, art, and trade, and exercise his industry in peace and security, and raise the greater and better produce for the market, in which he would be remunerated and the mass are benefited, and which is necessary for the common good.

The good in common is not that which men are to imagine is meant or is practicable for good as a general rule, or in a general sense for property, but only in particular cases, and we are therefore to keep the distinction in our minds between our rights being common, common right to good, and common good, and to good in common, and that by the terms common right, or common good, we do not mean good in common is applicable to property, because such is impracticable in the institution of property as a measure for the common good, but would operate to defeat it, as all would suffer by the contest for or destruction of the benefit in property, or rather no produce from it would be raised to supply the good.

The institution of property shews us this fact,

the rule as to property of an exclusion of the good in common, by giving privilege in the owner, and to the exclusion of others ; but the object is, nevertheless, for the general good or benefit, the common good of the society by cultivation and improvement, and therefore to exclude the interference of others ; which greater good of society could not be effected in property if good was taken or held to be in common, for all then would interfere and take what the industry of another had raised, and thus prevent a succession, and defeat the object of raising it to bring him his return or his remuneration, by bringing the produce of his labour and improvements into the market, and for the general service, or benefit, or good.

We have, then, this rule for direction in regard to property, that the common good, for which property receives sanction, meaning the general benefit in good arising from the institution of it to society, is not the same as, nor does it mean the good in common, as applicable to property, or that it is practicable with the institution for the general benefit of society, for all to take the benefit arising or resulting from it, one the same as another, or at their will and pleasure, as such a step would oppose the object and purpose of it, and defeat that good intended to be raised, and secured by means of the establishment ; for such a principle existing as the good in common, no produce would be raised or supplied, which is produced by the institution of property, and the encouragement given and security provided

by it for the produce raised and the benefit and good so produced by it.

Consideration of property with respect to the dispensation of good to society, and meeting the right of all to their good. Having, therefore, these principles for the institution of property, and the justification of it for good, that all have right to the good in it, but that good is not and cannot be taken in common, as that would destroy or defeat the purpose of good in property, I next propose the consideration of property with the view of the dispensation of good throughout society, and the mode of meeting the right of all to good, for which they all consent to the institution ; and which institution depends upon the consent to it for such objects and purposes.

Property, in whatever form it may exist, not disturbed or changed, but subject to the claim of society on it for good. We have been considering the elementary nature in moral estimation, or principles of property, the ground and purport of its institution and justification ; and to obtain, if we can, certain principles to guide and govern us regarding its purpose. We have now to consider it in its form or state of existence, wherever it may be or in whatever it may consist, but the practicability of its direction for the purposes on which it is founded, as to the dispensation of good to the society.

We will not alarm the possessor, or the state, that we are proposing to remodel or reframe the establishment. No, we are only going to consider it as it may at any present time be, wherever it is.

The laws, rules, customs relating to it, the possession and enjoyment of it, are not the subjects that I meddle with, further than as original principles apply to such, namely, that it rests on, and is founded for the purpose and object of good ; but any existing laws, alterations, more provident systems, or regulations for the institution, its management or direction, that, as matter of polity, may be considered advisable, or thought necessary, such I do not imagine, and leave these to the governments, the laws, the nations, the people, and others, as it may be of concern wherever it is. I touch not these, further than general principles, for the purpose and object of the institution, and leave the application of these to others the powers ruling, and the subjects ruled, and the laws and authorities existing, wherever property is, or is recognised, or becomes established, or forms an institution of society.

How useless, how wild and visionary would it be to consider property under any other view than it is found to exist, distributed, ramified, and possessed by all and each of the members of a state, the state, country, or nation where it may be.

Let every one feel consoled if the principles or truths I have developed or explained have made any impression on them, and such as are felt to have claims on them to give their attention to these truths, the better to regulate moral considerations and conduct themselves by them ; that it is not within my meaning to consider variations or alterations in the institution of property. I am only

pleading the laws or principles of direction upon which men act, and shew and establish the truth of them to see them clearer; and that men, satisfied and convinced of the truth, will regard such principles the better, and form and regulate themselves better by them, with less doubt, or rather with no doubt, convinced of the truth of the law for their direction, for the better observance of the law, that is, in accordance with reason, directed by reason, with higher and more cordial satisfaction of the course they pursue and adopt in doing good, as far and as well as they see it is practicable, or within the means of their attainment.

I add nothing more to the burdens of man to perform, he has the same duties which he practically acquires a knowledge of, and are enforced and maintained by all moralists and moral writers. I simply satisfy him of the law he has in his peculiar nature, by explaining what that nature is, in directing him, that of his moral nature in his reason of which he is possessed, by which he is directed to and can only approve good, and that in the sight of this truth, and the certainty of it, and in his conviction of that truth and certainty of the law of his nature, he will become stedfast in his regard and adherence to it, and in his endeavours to meet its purpose in doing good, as that which is reasonably desirable for man, and within compass of his attainment.

In a philosophical view I endeavour to shew the authority man has in his moral means or nature,

when enquired into and examined, in the law or rule of that nature ruling and directing man of reason; and which, as far as we can see, and discover in its direction is the authority for that good whence are their rights and claim to it, and as the authority of men for good, are also their duties as such authority for the practice of it, and for those virtues that will effect it; which rules or precepts in the virtues, practical knowledge or experience teaches to all mankind, and which all, of every denomination learn or know something of, some vestige being found to exist in all, however slight.

The means of moral control again adverted to, for the direction of men on the subject of property, and coercive means referred to as the province of government and law, but not entered upon here.

which such good can be practically effected.

It is in his moral government alone I interfere, and seek to influence but to do good; not by the compulsory means of outward force, but by the seeing, and his conviction, of the truth of the law he has within him to direct him, that he should follow, and that he cannot justify himself by any other mode, and by the rules that offer themselves in the consideration of the subject by

Then the course of human direction is made plain and is open to him, and in his common discernment and what of need he learns in life of the course considerate of others that is practicable, in truth, justice, mercy, charity, and in honesty with his fellow creatures, he feels and knows these are maintained by this law of his nature directing him to good. The object here is to shew him this law

as the authority of the precepts as those modes of action by which good is effected or is practicable in "property;" I have here no other consideration of it than as it exists in the form and frame of it, wherever it may be, and of whatever it may consist. Every person may acquire what he lawfully and honestly can, and to any extent, and may have full power over his property, and in the enjoyment of it legally, and for honest purposes.

But the object and purpose of the institution is for good, it is consented to for this purpose. It exists upon the consent or agreement of the present generations at all times, to the rules and laws they find existing and transmitted to them by their fore-fathers and by their adherence to them, but for the purpose and object of good; and it is maintained and supported by the governments of nations, and the laws, and by the people; whose support and maintenance of the government and laws must be reasonably inferred wherever they exist, but for the purpose of good as a general principle.

Every individual has his right as man to his good, and every individual in his right hopes and expects to have his good met and provided for in the common good of the state and society, and from the "property" in it.

The dispersion of the good in "property" is through the channels of employment it affords, the remuneration of labour in cultivating the land, raising corn, fruits, and other produce; by breeding and rearing of cattle, herds, and flocks, and the various animals

of use and service to man, and through arts, handi-craft and manufactures, trade and commerce. But if these sources fail to yield good to all, justice, mercy and charity, as the precepts for effecting practically the law of his direction, demand the recognition of the right of man to good, and to those, the people of the state or country wherever it is, who may be in want or destitute.

The great virtue or precept of charity arises in the institution of property. It is in the want and destitution which will occur in society to some portion of the people, that in the necessity there is of establishing property for the benefit or good in such institution, that good to be provided and dispensed, "Charity," the greatest and first of all human virtues, arises and is called for.

It is under this case of human relations and proceedings, that the exercise of charity is required of the owners or possessors of property.

When, therefore, people are suffering under want, and are destitute, and cannot obtain their good from those sources of supply, or whence their supply through the channels from which the good is to be obtained by the institution of property, of employment, business, work, or labour; here it is apparent the dispensation of the good must come from those who are in possession of the benefits resulting from property, and have abundance beyond their own wants and necessities, and they are the means by which the good is to be supplied from it; which cannot otherwise be obtained by the ordinary means, in the

channels or sources whence it is drawn, to those in want and destitute.

This dispensation is charity, which necessarily arises under the constitution of property, that in the appropriation of things and for the good in the increase and abundance thence resulting, and which excludes all others than the possessors. When therefore the others of the society cannot obtain it by ordinary means, or the channels through which it is distributed, it is to be afforded by those who have the power and means in their possession to give it. This is "charity."

Charity is called for, and arises in the very nature of society and the institution of property for the object and purposes of good, when the others of society, not the possessors, are in want and destitute and must suffer, and finally must perish, unless they are supplied with the means of life.

Charity is one of those rules which forces itself on our notice in the practical knowledge of life, and the proceedings of mankind, and which offer practical means of direction by which men can regard one another, and good can be effected in the actions and transactions of men, which cannot be followed or pursued without some interferences and some detriment to each other's good ; but which good can only in a degree be regarded or effected, and for which the precepts of life are our guide and direction and minor rules, and which have been before noticed, to effect the greater principle of good as practicable.

Charity is one of these minor rules or precepts of life ; but as looking on charity as one of the precepts of life, and as a virtue in the good it dispenses, it is the first and greatest precept of all human virtues. It has been in all ages, times, and places, kingdoms, governments, and countries, a virtue looked up to and extolled, that has gained universal respect and esteem, and in those that practise it, the love, veneration, and respect of every person, not only of the partakers of it, but of those who are their contemporaries and fellow citizens and countrymen, and of those in power and authority. It is the great feature and ornament of all religions, be they what they may, however inexorable under prejudices, and inveteracies of ignorance, such may deny it to separate sects, and strangers, or to those looked upon as enemies, charity nevertheless, among the sects themselves, is cherished as the highest of all earthly virtues. Of Christianity it is declared the first of all human good in acts, and of human estimations, and that most acceptable to the Divinity. And it is not less in a human view or contemplation of man through the means it has pleased the Divine Author of our existence to bless man with for his direction.

It is the first and greatest of virtues, because it is in aid for that required for good of first demand for the wants and necessities of man, and for immediate succour where otherwise the destitute must perish ; and at all times to appease the anguish of mind in the needy and distressed, that their pro-

spects may be cheered with relief and assistance; and it is the means of diffusing the greatest comfort and benefit to the large and suffering portion of the society in want, which the poor will always be, from the casualties of trade and employ, which, the larger a society is, as far as human foresight and calculation can go, is ever likely to be the certain consequence. The owners and possessors of property are those who are blessed with the good and benefit of society and its institutions, and of that, of their property especially, who can from their abundance be the dispensers of charity, and whom for the object of the establishment in good, can only be looked upon as the free distributors of it to those who need it,

To the owners and proprietors in their abundance beyond their own necessities, where others are in want and destitution, the dispensation of charity must be looked for, and from whom that good, the object of the institution is to flow, the ordinary channels of distribution not reaching those in want and destitute.

The rich and affluent are called upon by their duties to do good, and having the benefit of property, and by it the means of dispensing the good of charity in property established for good, they are the persons bound by the law of human direction in the moral nature of man of reason directing him to good, to dispense the good, having the means to do so in that institution of man of "property" which is constituted for that object.

As human beings they cannot take their rights without their duties, which is the same authority in the human mind of reason directing man to good, and by that law approving to do what is so. And therefore in reason we establish this greatest of all human virtues of "charity," and we disobey our duties if we are not charitable; by denying it, or refusing it, we do a wrong and an injustice to those in want, who have a right to good, and should receive it from, or be responded to by, those in whom the means has been placed for that object in "property."

If, therefore, we are not charitable we are committing an injustice and an offence to men in a dereliction of duties imposed and required by the laws in that nature implanted in, and given us by the Creator, as far as we can see by our enquiry and examination of them; and we are also offending against that law which, as far as we can see, is the will of God we should observe by the means of discernment he has blessed us with, in our nature as reasonable beings, for our direction to good.

I have now traced the moral law or rule of human direction; the law we obtain in the nature of man for his direction, by enquiring into the nature of that law for the direction of us to good in the institution of property; and the rule men have for affording the good, by those who have the means in possessing of property, in dispensing the good through the abundance beyond their own necessities to those in want and destitute; and having

shewn this rule to arise in the law of our nature directing us as human beings to good, and that charity is that rule *traced* as the human means to effect the dispensation of good.

This law, which cannot be rejected by reasonable man, is a law to direct him of that power or nature implanted in man by his Creator, which nature man sees himself when he enquires into and examines it, and that it is a power for his direction to do good, and the effecting of which is by the institution of property, as a measure required for it and essential to it.

In the further consideration of this law or rule, the first of human virtues, of charity, I will refer to the observation made in a former work, namely, "that charity is an act of voluntary justice by those possessing property towards those who are in want, or who are destitute." These are commonly called the poor.

Private or voluntary charity every one may and will probably know or find objects in sufficient number and necessity, to call forth his exercising this great virtue. But it is evident that the acts of individuals cannot be extended to the wants and destitution of the society at large, especially of large states or communities, from the number and extent or distance of the many claimants. It cannot be conceived even that the largest possessor of lands

and riches, and abundance, more than his own wants and necessities require, could search into and dispense to the need of all. It may be considered that every one will meet with plenty of subjects of their own knowledge or powers to enquire into, to call for their voluntary and freewill dispensations and acts of charity, and will, it is to be hoped, respond to the claims on them, and the duties of man. But large states and communities of men require regulations for the care and dispensation to these claims.

The public provision for whoever may be in want, or the destitute, can only be considered as the subject of regard of the state, and that the members of the community shall contribute according to their ability in their possessions, or their ostensible means.

The compulsory practice of charity, or distribution of the good to the members of the community in want or destitute, can only be met by the act of the state or government, the legislature, or the conventional laws of the country or society made for the purpose of the dispensation.

In the direction of man to good in the law of his nature, government and civil and conventional law are raised and formed for the effecting and securing good, in conformity with the moral law, where power and coercion is required, and as such must be held to be the power and voice of the society where existing.

As the object of all human proceedings and of

governments presiding over society is that which man is directed to by the law of his moral nature, and that is "good," it is the office, therefore, of government to provide that the right to good is regarded in all in the community, as far as in the power of human foresight, and wisdom, and capacity to effect. In the right of man to good, and governments constituted to effect and further the object of good, such power or authority have it, therefore, as their charge to provide for and take care of the consideration of all in the society in their good; and in justice, more especially to those in want and destitute, who, but for the necessity of constituting property for the good of society, and the greater good raised by such establishment or institution, would be at liberty to take their good as they might, or it could be taken or attainable in those things of which property consisted, if such was not constituted, but was free and common to all; but constituted for good, those who are excluded from that of which property consists, are nevertheless to be considered in their rights to good, and for which purpose it is constituted, and on which alone can the institution be supported.

The conventional nature of property adverted to again to recall the attention to the claim of society on it, and in this the right of all to

It may be here proper again to call to the attention the ground on which the claim of those in want and destitute rest. It is to be considered that in the conventional nature of property, and in constituting it, the interference or power of those not owners

good, and to be effected through the institution of it. or proprietors is withdrawn, to establish privilege over that of which it consists in the owners or proprietors, and that the immediate good of such, not owners, that might otherwise be taken in it, is abstained from, and they are excluded from the land and other things, that good may be better raised from such by the establishing property in it. Such, therefore, not possessed of the substance or things of which property consists, and the immediate good in such, are under restraints by which others that are in possession have and enjoy it; such without the property are excluded for the benefit of others enjoying it, but not totally or without a reserve of the good to be taken through employ, labour, arts, trade or commerce. Those without property agree to the exclusion by which those possessed of it are benefited, but their claim or right to good is the same, and therefore but for such exclusion or restraint they might take, or seek to obtain their good in the land, or whatever else offered itself of use or benefit; but because without they agree to restraint, to respect the benefit of the possessor of property, and for good, when they restrained cannot have it by the ordinary means of employ and labour, are they who agree to the measure, and to benefit others, and for good, to be excluded from that good absolutely and entirely, and even to their own destruction, in want and destitution?

They in reason only agree to the institution of

property for good, and that to be drawn ordinarily by employ and labour; but if that fails, their agreement is yet for good, and in reason cannot be defeated.

They only agree to it, and by so agreeing yield up, provisionally, their own good, but to take it out in labour and employ, and this source not yielding it, the purpose of convention is not fulfilled, and this claim must either be met by charity for peace and order and good, or their convention is broken, and they may resume in all reason their original liberty and power to take or obtain their good from the land, or any other thing in common.

But hence disorder and contest would arise, and government raised to effect and secure the good in community, has to supply the mode of dispensing the good, to avoid this state of things.

The object and necessity of government to provide for the rights of all to good, and from that which is raised to such for the consideration of their and constituted but for that object, as property is.

and having the authority to carry into effect the good of the community, and to respond to the right of those in want or destitute; and in justice, therefore, means to consider them: and if those

in want and destitute are not considered for their good, then injustice is done to them, and the principle (the conventional agreement, implied or declared, for good) upon which they are bound to regard and respect property is broken with them, if evil only is the result of the conven-

tion of men by the institution, and if they shall think it well or convenient to act upon it, in all justice they may resume their original position in exercising their right to good, and reclaim that of which it consists, yielded in the convention.

This we cannot recommend, because the consequence would be anarchy, disorder, and contest, and evil: and even under such circumstances of the destitute, for peace and good, we can only advise remonstrance and suffering and endurance, until justice and righteousness shall penetrate the minds and feelings of the obdurate and oppressor.

The good, however, as that man has right to, when any such are in want or destitute, it can only be held in reason that their good is to be provided for, and the provision, whatever it may be, should be good, and not to their detraction, their insult, or their protracted misery; and while the charity is afforded, it ought not to be at the expense of their feelings, either in body or mind, but with such wholesome rule and restraint as is required to preserve peace and order. The limit will be that which will least affect or defeat the ends of property in good.

Caution re-
quired in-
making pro-
vision.

In making provision for those in want and destitute, it is essentially to be regarded that want and destitution is not

to be created or aggravated either by encouragement given to idleness or vice, on the one hand, by injudicious administration to the necessities of those in want, or on the other hand, by impoverishment of those already on the verge of

want and destitution ; and especially upon every consideration of justice and humanity, those in classes or stations of life on the verge of such state, should not be the subjects of direct taxation for assistance to others. And both with regard to taxation for those in want and destitute, and for any other object or purposes of the state, it is impolitic and bad to impose taxations that oppose or prevent or operate in such manner as to frustrate the raising of produce in the cultivation of land, and by which the good and benefit of the society is thereby prejudiced. Such, however, are subjects of polity, and do not form the subject of the considerations here entered upon, at the same time bearing reference to it, are not improper to allude to, and seeing that in many cases in making levies and taxations those in authority do not appear always to regard this essential and common and plain rule for the good of every society or state.

Further consideration of the means, and government and law, as such, of carrying into effect this dispensation of good in charity and preserve peace and order in society.

In all human reason, the use and purpose of governments and laws are for the promoting and securing the object man is directed to by the law moving him to good, to protect the weak against the strong, to do justice, to society.

Men directed to good by the law of their nature in reason, this is their idea or view of the purposes in governments or laws ; and in all human estimation in reason government can be viewed as raised and instituted for no other object

than good, and to promote and secure that good in the states and communities they preside over, and which require rules and regulations for their direction and control for that object, namely, the good.

It therefore devolves on government to provide and secure the good of all the members of the state or community they preside over, as far as practicable, and the good of those in want and destitute in the community or society, and to which the right of every one entitles them, the supply ceasing through the means failing to afford it, in the ordinary channels of employ and labour.

The public measure of charity for the benefit of the community it is the business of the government to provide and secure, as part of the good for which such is constituted, whenever it is required, and as charity necessarily will be required, in all states and communities of men.

In a general view of good, it can only be supplied from "property," that of the land and produce and generally of all things of which property consists, and by the personal actions of men towards one another, or as they may affect or concern one another.

In this latter mode it consists of two kinds, both negative and positive, the negative, in the not doing acts that will personally hurt or injure one another, and their property if they have any ; and positive, in doing them service in aid and assistance for their good or benefit.

The chief benefit, however, to be afforded to man

is through the former subject, "property," because in this consists their sustenance, and other things of necessary use and benefit, as clothing and shelter when required.

If good is not rendered, or it is not compassed by society to the individuals of it, where is that good, the object of all men, and to which all are directed by the law directing man to good, and the object of which is implied or is to be secured to men in society?

Good is the object of all human purposes; and in reason, as the means man has to guide him, is to be afforded in society, else that is failing in the general object of good, and the purpose for which all men enter into it, and combine for the good of one another, if it ceases or does not exist.

We all speak of the bond and compact of society, which is in the conventionary nature of it, or the agreement or assent implied or otherwise declared of all in the state, nation or people, forming community for the object men are all directed to practically in the experience and the necessity of it for good, and adhering to it on principle for that purpose, and morally as directed by the law of this nature.

The compact
of society
again adverted
to as the ob-
ject of man
for good, and

What is it then the compact for, but the object of good in society and the duty of men to do good. But if the individuals of society, especially of so large a portion as those in want or destitution

authority for
the rights of
men to good
being regarded
as well as the
necessity of
regarding such
rights for the
good of society.

have not good yielded to them, the compact of society in the agreement or understanding between men implied, of mutual respect and consideration of one another in their good, without which men cannot associate for good, is broken, when the good that should be proceeding from society, and what is required for it as essential to it in property, is precluded to those in want or destitute, and is denied or refused to them. These, in all large and populous states, will form the larger portion or section of the members of society for the object for which society is formed or upheld; and the respect and consideration necessary for it by men to each other for the good in it, is defeated or is not shewn or had by the neglect of regard or consideration, of those in want or destitute by the only means their good is to be promoted or effected, by sustenance, or aid out of that of which property consists, the ordinary sources failing of supply through employ or labour.

The compact of society is broken with, or defeated as to these; but notwithstanding the compact of society may be broken by those who have the means, in the disregard of them whose necessities require assistance and supply from others. The law of the moral nature of man, of reason that directs men to good is not affected or hurt, that remains as ever, or men could not know or estimate their good, or

feel or know when they suffered wrong or injustice in being deprived of it; and therefore men will always know when they suffer wrongly or morally an injustice in want of kind and charitable consideration.

Sufferings and
endurances
not designed,
should be
borne with in
patience.

It is almost impossible but that some must experience great suffering in want and destitution; and in great states or societies, particularly of dense population, such suffering, want and destitution

may occasionally be experienced in a very great degree. In great and populous states relief or aid is or can only be afforded through systematic rules and regulations for the peace and welfare of society that will be found requisite for affording relief, and dispensing relief and assistance. Occasional suffering may be unavoidable. It may accidentally happen that distress is not known, or when it is, that it cannot immediately have the succour administered. I allude not to the cases of suffering where it is not intended that those in want or destitute shall suffer by the restrictions requisite for maintaining property, where those in want are shut out from relief or assistance, but it is in the case where on bad or mistaken principles those that may be in want or destitute shall not be relieved from the stores and supplies property affords; and where it shall be refused or denied on the rule that property constituted, excludes the good from all except the owner or proprietor, except at his will and pleasure, and no provision is made by the state, or

government presiding in the state, to dispense good to such as may be in want or destitute.

When the right all have to good is recognised, and provision or establishment is made for dispensations and good to those in want and destitute ; the delay or regulations for administering public charity of necessity cannot, perhaps, always be avoided. The most prompt means, nevertheless, should be considered, and if vexation and difficulty is not purposely put in the way, there can be no real ground of complaint on the principle of intention, if all is done that can be reasonably suggested and arranged, and practicable with the good and peaceable state of society.

In thinly peopled states with extensive wilds and land lying open, although there may be those in want and destitute, means may offer of support which cannot be obtained in densely peopled states, and systematic provision may be dispensed with, or the necessity of such does not arise. But in populous states, and in large and populous districts and cities and the whole land appropriated, the society can only live and depend on what they can draw from employ and labour, arts, trade and commerce ; and in every flourishing and prosperous state there will of necessity be the greater number who experience want and destitution. Such will probably form a very large proportion of the state, and when the means of drawing their supply from property in employ and labour fails, such can only look to the charitable and humane.

Governments again adverted to as the means of providing for the general good. But for the more certain and regulated supply, the subject of relief can only be considered the business of the government and state.

It is in such cases that the right of all the subjects to good is required to be considered and provided for, and if denied or refused, then is a wrong and injustice done to those of the subjects suffering, who combining in a state of society for good, support that essential of all institutions in "property" for that good.

When states, moreover, grow to large populations, and densely peopled districts, and cities arise from the flourishing state and prosperity of nations, then is the necessity arrived above all other considerations of relief of those in want and destitute, who will always form in such states a large proportion of its members, and to promote the peace and welfare of such states, and their prosperity, the claims and rights of the members of them to their good cannot be refused or denied to them in the time of their wants and destitution without wrong and injustice, and producing the evils of a dissatisfied and injured multitude.

It is perhaps to one cause more than any other that society, built up in the necessity there is of property, forget or do not see the right or claim to good of all, to that of which it consists; and that the members of the state are restrained but for good, but not excluded; yet, leaning only to the view of its exclusive protection and security, re-

spond not to the occasions where the good must be dispensed to meet the claims of all to their rights to good ; and that arrived at a great extent of population, commerce and riches, the demand is the more urgent and necessitous in the dissatisfaction ; and then tumult arising, states and nations fall the more irretrievably as their splendour may have been at the highest acme of greatness.

It is here the want of science in the moral law for the rule and direction of men has been wanting, to point out those true principles and objects in society and its institutions, and attending to wholesome and right rules for the consideration of man ; and which attending to in time, and with proper remedial measures, would have prevented those calamities which have been the source of suffering, and of the downfall and extermination of many nations and people, whose existence and former greatness now only are known in history ; and states and countries which grow into greatness and do not see the necessity of providing for the exigency of such greatness in the multitudes raised and depending on them, have the seeds of their own destruction in the disturbance and dissatisfaction of the people, and must fall or perish if they do not provide for the wants of those from whose numbers and combination of their labour and industry they in fact depend and become great and prosperous, or of any consideration as a people.

The peace, happiness, and rightful claim of all in want and desti-

prosperity of
people and
nations de-
pend on cha-
rity.

tution is certain ; that it is the object and duty of all wise and good governments directed by the law of human nature to good, and to promote, to provide, and secure the means of public dispensation of good or charity, is as certain ; and the peace and welfare of every state, it is evident, depend upon the just and sufficient provisions made to meet the right of all to their good. And any nation who excludes charity, and any government that does not provide it, and secure it to those in want and destitute, commits wrong and injustice by them ; and in the dissatisfaction and justness of the displeasure of the suffering, such cannot be a happy or a contented people, or can their prosperity be enduring as a nation.

Farther notice
that some ills
and endur-
ances must be
borne with as
unavoidable.

Some ills, some wrong, some injus-
tice, no question must be endured in
life ; but what is not intended, or can-
not be attended to from unavoidable
circumstances, the members of all states
may reconcile themselves to and be content to bear.
It will be impossible, probably, but that in society,
and the measures required for the preservation of
peace, and order, and laws, but some partial evils
may be sustained by some. It is only where sys-
tematic wrong and injustice is promoted—it is the
same as to effect, whether in ignorance or in de-
sign, the acts of men can be arraigned as bad and
wrong, and being wilfully so, as vice and crimi-
nality. But to do a positive wrong, and deny or

refuse good, the first principle of all human proceedings, on which every thing proceeding from man is alone directed and justifiable, is to oppose human nature, and the dispensations of Providence to man in the higher means given him to raise him above the other created beings not so gifted, on the same earth with himself; and cannot be justified or reconciled with the design it has pleased God to enable man to see and judge of by those powers he has blessed his creature with, of mind and reason.

Evils in society consequent of the disregard of the law of human direction.

Let us review the evil and dangers that threaten us when not regarding this law directing us to good. If those in want and destitute, then, are not to be considered in their rights, but instead

are considered an excluded portion of society from the good held out and offered to men in that state, and its institutions, especially in that great and absorbing measure of "property;" what must be, what is, the necessary consequence? That the larger portion of society, and the more beneficial to the state as to labour and production, that the object to them of good held out by society when they may want, (for at other times, when their services are required, others for their own interest will employ them,) but that it is a fallacy, as far as respects their wants and necessities; and that their just claim in their rights, and the law of the moral direction of man to good, is disregarded as concerns them, and the respect of "property" or obedience to the laws for the good pur-

poses of society are of no avail. The sufferers must be averted from their respect or considerations of regard for society, and the precepts of virtue or rules for their lives and actions, by which society can be maintained, and men can conduct themselves in a practicable manner for the effecting good in the precepts of truth, of honesty, of justice, of charity, and of humanity generally. Such sufferers will no longer regard those as rules for their lives requisite for society for any good ; but as force or coercion, not virtue, may compel them to respect those possessed of property.

They will no longer consider they are to regard society for good which only offers to them evil, neither that they can have any duty to regard evil, which only presents itself to them in society, the law proclaimed in the moral constitution of his direction to good when enquired into and seen, forbids it. And thus when justice is withheld and injustice only offered as the rule or measure of proceedings by those in possession of property, with regard to those in want and destitute, will the mind of society, abstracted and averted from the precepts of virtue, become demoralized, and the class injured and wronged will no longer consider they have duties to regard those only benefited in property, or their possessions.

Business here is only to point out the law of human direction. My business is the endeavour only to point out the law directing man to good, and the course of men appropriate for this in what is right, and good,

and wholesome, and beneficial, and practicable, in those precepts men learn in life we deem virtuous and good, as opposed to the contrary, the vicious and bad.

The consequences or effects of a disregard of the law requisite to be attended to.

Yet it is my business to point out the evils and the consequences of a disregard of the duties of men for respect or consideration of one another, and what must inevitably be the result where the law directing man to good is

not adhered to, but is denied, and the precepts for the conduct of men in virtue are disregarded ; and that the misconduct of men will produce in the other portions of society, affected by the wrongs and injustice it will inflict on them, dissatisfaction and hostile feelings, and should the governing and ruling authorities of any state deny the principles of virtue as the ruling direction of men, or deprecate and exclude the consideration of the distressed from relief, and deny or refuse in effect the acknowledging of the rights of men to good and the duties to regard men in their rights, if it does not produce popular outbreaks against the laws, it must engender vice and depravity in the subjects of those states to accommodate or countervail in some degree the evils and misery they are sure to sustain in consequence of vicious and unprincipled measures.

It is in the wants and necessities of men in society that governments are more called upon to uphold and maintain the precepts of virtue, and prevent the evil of a departure from them, than

any other object or purpose that can fall under their charge or care ; and as one business or duty they have in charge is to protect the weak against the strong, so are they called on to protect those in want and destitute against those possessing property and power, disregarding the rights of others in want and destitution, and denying or withholding from them relief in the denial of the precept of charity.

More especial
province of
governments
to protect
those in want
and destitute.

The class from whence those in want and destitute arise are more numerous than any others in populous and commercial states, and that portion the most beneficial in labour and production, and whom governments have in charge to consider for the general good and to protect. But though the stronger in number and force of nature, they are, perhaps, the weaker in influence and means of power of effecting their good by affluence and riches, and are therefore, as the weaker in the artificial means of power, more the especial care and object of the government to protect against injustice and oppression by the influence and power of riches, and to prevent and avoid their having recourse to their stronger means in number and natural power, through injustice and wrongs rendering society an evil instead of a good, and from such cause averting their minds and feelings from a regard of society to a disregard of it, and of the rules and precepts of life and action, by which only men can live in community and regard each other for good.

Consideration of the regard of those in want and destitute.

Let us turn from this state or view of the sufferings of humanity and the evils and calamities from want of due regard and consideration by men of one another to the direction we have to good in the law of our moral nature, to the consideration of doing good how this is to be effected as to those who are in want and destitute, as the purpose of this point of our enquiry here, and to set forth in reference to the subject of property.

In calling the attention to those that are in want and destitute, I will first premise that our consideration is not to be diminished, repulsed, averted or prejudiced, because such may appear before us under the disadvantage of ignorance, of manners, of appearance, language or behaviour; for their sufferings, their anguish of mind, and misery will necessarily occasion unfavourable appearances, and for their destitution therefore are they to be commiserated.

Those whom we shall have to consider and regard in want and in destitution, and who will have occasion to claim our regard and consideration for their wants and sufferings, will not appear to us often under the attractive circumstances of pleasure or delight; but more probably oftener of the contrary. It is our duty, nevertheless, not the less to regard those in want and destitute from the appearance, and to overcome any feeling of repugnance from such causes towards their respect and consideration, under the reflections of their sufferings

requiring the greater consolation to soften and appease their feelings in what they endure ; and under the reflection that those who may be better off, and having greater comforts and enjoyments, have not the sufferings to contend with those may endure who require aid, relief, and assistance.

That such who are well supplied or affluent have the less cause to disturb their manners and behaviour, or excite their tempers or other bad feelings of envy or jealousy, or their bad passions than those in need.

In meeting the wants and destitution of others, their right entitles them to good, and having their claim to it, those affording it, who are able, are but performing their duty to do good in charity, and of respect and consideration to them who need it, pointed out by the law directing us to do good, and enjoined on us by that nature we are enabled to see, by the powers we are blessed with of mind and reason for good. It is the claim of those in want and destitute to be considered, without taunt at their misfortunes or woes, or revilement for their poverty, and the consideration of such free of all claim of compensation from those for whom it is required as free alms.

We are here only considering giving alms in charity to those in want and destitute for immediate relief. The subject of relief by modes of employ, that if it would not prevent want and destitution, might mitigate it ; and at the same time relief was afforded, a return yielded, by the labour or service

rendered for it, is another consideration ; more that of policy, and however proper and of great importance to be considered, I do not discuss here. We are only speaking of the measure of bestowing alms where and when the necessities of men, from whatever source arising, calls for it.

Charity for good can only be given in kindness, and cheerfully, freely, and with good will, and with respect, to those who need it, or otherwise it has the alloy of insult or upbraiding or other ill disposition towards those to whom it is given. Above all other considerations, it is to be given for good, without unkindness, revilement, or any cause of annoyance to the feelings of those on whom it is bestowed.

Want and destitution does not sanction the invasion of property by those in need.

Individual or private charity of necessity must be at the will and option of those who have the means. In the present case, we are shewing and advocating the right of men to good, and explaining their claim to have it bestowed from

that of which property consists, that it is a duty necessarily reposed in individuals to perform, and it is proper to notice that it would not be practicable for good, and therefore cannot be admissible, that those in want and destitute shall have it at their option to help themselves, and take as they like, and invade what was constituted property; for were this the case, then would be defeated the institution, and all the goods resulting of care and management to raise and increase produce, and the advantage to the owners and proprietors for

their encouragement to such purposes, and the benefit of society at large effected by it.

But in this is seen the greater necessity of governments providing the means of supply, for security, and certainty of assistance, to those who may be in need, for the purpose of doing justice to their claim or right to good, and to preserve peace and order in the state, and to protect property as essential for this general good and welfare.

It will, to impress the mind more strongly of the case, be useful to refer once more to the position of the right of man to good, and that this right is in their direction to good by the law of their nature in their reason, and that we are considering how this direction can be carried into effect or is practicable; and that we are now considering this, in that great and essential means of effecting the good of man in the institution of property: and our business here is to see or consider how that is to be maintained and preserved, and at the same time the good which the right of every human being entitles him to have, is to be provided for and supplied.

In a good and wholesome and peaceful state of society the invasion of property cannot be permitted, and must be proscribed by the law, and the privilege of the owner and proprietor held sacred, subject, at the same time, for the purposes for which it is instituted of good, and the good of society and the claims the society have on it for that good; for this purpose are the dues, or taxes, or imposts and

charges levied on it for the service and use of government and the state. And no one ever questions the claim on property for the general good, and the right or justification of dues and levies on it for the public service and exigencies, and the power and authority resting with the laws or government to call for and impose the requisite subsidiary supplies for the exigencies of the state and the general good and welfare of the society.

The case of those in want and destitute to be provided for in the institutions of society, and as the especial object of them for the general good.

And in this general good, and the claim for this general good of society in property, and in the object of the institution for good, what can be more plain and evident than that the good the right of man entitles him to, and for which they all as individuals subscribe to the good.

institution, and withdraw their individual interference with the owners and proprietors, is included in that general good of the society, and is to be provided for as part of and included in it, that of those in want and destitute; and that when the sources fail of supply of the good or means of that good in the institutions of society, of the ordinary and legitimate sources of employ, labour, arts, trade or commerce, who can in reason gainsay that the good of those in want and destitute does not then fall into and belong to that class or distinction of good, called the general good of society, and for which a general claim is reserved in the institution of property; and is to be rendered as part of its object to supply and belonging to it to meet.

Can we have a doubt or question, but that good to which all mankind have right, by that manifest law implanted in him by his Creator, directing him to his good, is not part of that general good we look up to in society to promote, and is to be supplied from the means society offers in its institutions, most especially that of property, which is the chief means of supply, raised and promoted for that object of the general good, the result of and very purpose of society. And that such good is supplied as part of the general good, the object of society, by the means resulting from its institution of property, and out of the levies, dues and taxations on property for such purpose and object.

If man has right to good, as who that has reason and can see the law of God manifest in man when duly considered, giving man his right to good by his direction to it, cannot see that man has right to his good, and society is constituted but for good, and property as essentially necessary for society is instituted for it, and is the essential means of yielding man his good ; that good of man he has right to, is part of that good society is raised for and property is instituted, and his claim is reserved in it, in the good for which society is constituted, and the compact for it is entered into by all the members of that state.

What other as the general good can we look for in society but that supplied to man, and man forming part of that society, and to be provided for by the only means it can be yielded, and to that

portion who cannot otherwise have it, being in want and destitute? Such are certainly then the objects more especially contemplated in such general good, who, without property, cannot be supplied their good, but as contemplated in the general good to be supplied; and when that portion occurs in populous states or districts, more especially are they the object, as composing the larger and general mass, and the subject of the general good for which society exists and is cherished, promoted, and maintained. It only remains to consider how this good is to be provided, secured, and maintained.

Further argument for the consideration of man in the good of society, and as the object of the compact.

The right of man to good is exhibited, and I have lastly been shewing that good is the object of society, and that it is moreover practically recognised as the object everywhere and universally by man, and the knowledge of the moral law teaches and confirms this to him; and where individuals fail in obtaining it in society themselves, it is to be provided for them; for where is the good boasted of, for which men are required to subscribe and are held responsible for subscribing to and observing laws, regulations, and rules for the maintenance and support of the social compact, if that good is not dealt out to, or is not afforded the members of the state or society for which they subscribe to it, in its forms, and rules, and institutions necessary for it?

If it is not dealt out to those in want or destitute, the object of good in that society is not yielded to

them in such society to which they are parties ; and can it be imagined in reason for any other object than good ? And a breach of the implied compact with such for their aid and support of the society is a necessary result, and an injustice is done to them who are not benefited, or who rather, it may be said, are deprived of that benefit or good, the object and purpose of society.

Casually, accidentally, unintentionally, and unavoidably, all may suffer ills and wrong or injustice, but we are not looking to that ill, the effect of accident, but to that ill which can be avoided, and therefore which we, in duty bound to do good, are to avoid.

In looking to the wrongs and injustice done to men we are looking to those not of accident or which are unavoidable, but of those of bad design, bad rule, bad principle, vice, in truth, that defeats the good or denies it, which is unreasonable and contrary to the law of our direction ; and such is contrary to the object of society in good. For what other object is society constituted or can it be upheld ? And therefore if that good is not given or afforded, it is contrary to the purpose of society and the object for which it is entered into and maintained. It cannot be argued on principle that if good is the object, a part is not to have it, or is to suffer by principle or design ; no people in their senses, or rational beings, would concur in so monstrous a deformity or representation of humanity.

If good is proffered or held out to the view of

man in society, it can only be viewed in reason as the object to be afforded, and through the means and powers or sources offered through such compact or institution as society is ; but if the good is not afforded, then that object is not effected or performed.

The good of society is the general good, in which the good of all, not a part, is to be considered.

We cannot plead that the good generally only is meant, and not that of a part or portion, or some individuals. Good generally is not to be understood as the exclusion of a portion, but the general good of all, and that only there may be some alloy or ills experienced ; but the whole are to be generally benefited or receive good, although there may be some drawbacks or sufferings encountered. But want and destitution not supplied with relief, you do not subject that portion simply to a less quantity of good, or diminished benefit, but defeat and deprive them of all good ; and this is the point I contend for, in the object of society of good that is not fulfilled, (which is the boon, and principle, and object alone of the compact,) if those in want and destitute are refused or denied relief, for they have not that good they have right to, and which the object or purpose of society is to fulfil. Neither do they only experience a less or alloyed good, but are defeated in and deprived of all and any good that is requisite for man, and are exposed to a positive ill and evil, and of fatal effect and consequence if so practised against them, and carried to its extreme extent.

The good of society must be understood as the

good of all, but if a part of those in want or destitute are not to take, or have their good supplied to them, the good of society is not felt or experienced, and is no object to them, and the good proposed and assumed for its regard and institution is a failure, and in truth is a fallacy. And what I therefore wish to shew in this part of my observations is, that society founded for the good resulting to man is not a partial good but a general good that all are to partake in, or its principle, or the object of man, or the law for human direction, are disregarded or neglected, and those enduring ills under such case suffer wrong and injustice.

The meaning of general good is not applied that some only shall partake in good, and the rest systematically suffer, but that all shall have good; that good however may and will be various in degree, quality, nature, and quantity, and occasionally all will suffer some alloy or ills; but as a general object, the good is that all are to have, and their right recognised for it, though it may be varying in degree, but never less than necessity demands, and to suffice the calls of those in want or destitute.

What pretext exists for society as good, if a part only are enabled to partake of good, and it suiting their will, their whim, their pleasure, their caprice, or even their greater benefit, some portion not wanted or required shall be refused relief when in want or destitute? What purpose is answered of rational and reflecting man if the casualty of want

or destitution shall hang over his fate in society, and that the others to whom riches, affluence, and unbounded good is heaped from such state of society, shall have no feeling or duty of relief for those suffering, deny all relief, and when the period of suffering, comes, as come it surely will, shall deny and refuse all aid and relief, and feel that the fatal effect shall be a source of their gain or profit, as lessening the demand on their estate and revenues?

Unprincipled and revolting, horrible and detestable as such view is, that is presented to us if the good of all is not held to be the object of society, and the right of man to good is not responded to, such is the case and fact if those in want and destitute are not to be relieved, and of their right to be relieved. And it is in considering this subject, necessary to shew the enormity of the evil if the right of men to good is denied.

But the good of society is the basis and reason of its institution, and if the good of all is not really meant in this, what is the plea of the good that is meant, or to be understood, or pretended? Then if the good of all is not comprehended or implied what shall be understood is? Shall it be those only in whom property is vested, the possessors of the land, the possessors of goods, and wares, and merchandize, of jewels, of gold, or silver, or money? These only want the laws of respect of person and property. In such view their number might be confined to five in a million. In a state of large extent of country and small population it might be

supposed that a few landed proprietors were only the members of society of consideration, and the service of a few labourers, serfs, or slaves, might be profitable and desirable. But in large and populous states and districts where agriculture, manufactures, arts, trade, and commerce flourish, and the more prosperous and flourishing the greater the numbers, to certain extent, the more certain is the case, that many must be in want and destitute when employ or labour cease or is not required.

These numbers will probably be a very large portion of the society, and of that portion that work and labour, and produce the good to others possessed of property ; these numbers will probably, we may say certainly, be those who will be that portion who will be in want and destitution, not probably all at the same time, but they will be that class or portion of society that are occasionally placed in the situation of need. They will be the laborious portion in manual occupations, the artisans, the mechanics, the common labourer, all forming what some call the operatives of society ; and at all events they will be the sinews of work, the source from whence all the riches come, and good in the society is performed. They are those from whom all the produce of the fields, the earth, the waters, the seas, arts, crafts, manufactures, trades, and commerce are raised and compassed ; and they will be that portion or class of the society from whose services the large owners and possessors of property have their possessions rendered fruitful,

and useful, and valuable, and who, by their means, are benefited and enriched, and by whom, practically, the good of the society is compassed and effected.

This class or portion will be of necessity, or for the most part, dependent on their daily labour for their support and existence, and the mass for no more certain employ than daily, weekly, or monthly wages, and few, comparatively, for so great extent of certain employ as yearly hire, except as slaves or serfs, in which character, which are excluded our consideration here, not now being recognised in our laws, I do not intend to view the state of the laborious portion or classes of society.

It is this class or portion of society, the labourer and workmen in a free state, that will constantly, and ever in large and populous states and districts, be liable to be thrown out of employ by their services not being wanted by those who have had their services for a time, while wanted, or while a demand existed of their wares and merchandize they by their labour brought into shape and form, which demand ceasing, ceases the occasion for their services, they are thrown out of employ and work, and their own little means expended, are in want and destitution.

It may not happen that the whole of this class or portion of the society may be in want or in destitution at the same time; but, as said before, it will be from this class or portion alluded to, that the sufferings of want and destitution will arise and be chiefly prevailing and felt.

The class that more especially will require the necessity of charity and protection of governments and laws.

This class or portion of society will not only in all states of any compass or prosperity be the most numerous, but in fact the most truly beneficial from their personal service to the state and community.

It is true they will derive good from the society, while employed in labour for the wants of the society, and the many arts and employments society will create; but shall it only be while employed that they shall be the object of the good or benefit of the social state? Shall they contribute chiefly to the benefit and service of the society, and not reap the benefit when their services are not wanted? Apply that argument to the rich.

Why should they be respected when they cease to be of good any more than the labourer when he has performed his work and is no longer wanted? But the good aimed at is that to be continuous; and therefore as the possessors of property and rich are to be respected and secured and maintained in their possessions subject to the claims of the general good of society, so are the labourers and artisans and those in want and destitute, when their good is suspended in its usual course or channel, to be supplied and their distress relieved in all reason by means of art or measures in the policy of laws and measures wholesome and practicable for the state.

Again I ask, shall the meaning of the good of

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society be imagined or applied only to those who are the owners and proprietors, and that the labouring class, a portion the most numerous and the most personally useful and beneficial, be not meant or comprehended in that good for which the society is instituted and kept together?

Can it be presumed for one moment in reason, that only the few are meant as comprehended within the good of society, and the mass are not thought of or considered as its objects? and assuming that such an unreasonable view cannot be maintained of the good of society, but that the whole state is included in such good, then as this larger class or portion will be those in want or destitution, or from whose ranks want and destitution will mostly, and almost certainly, and, comparatively, only prevail, the good of this class or portion is more the subject of this good meant in society, than any other. They will be the larger and more beneficial portion, and have for service and necessity the greater occasion for it.

The owner or possessor of affluence or competence simply requires respect and consideration in his person and property. This is all the good they need in society, and can claim of others; but those in want and destitute need the good the result of society, beyond respect of person or property, and this in its produce, its abundance, the main object of society, and as far as we can see of first necessity, and which when supplied, the luxuries, the splen-

dour and magnificence of states may next be of consideration, and as sources of extending happiness, employment and utility to man.

The good of society has heretofore, appears to me to have been a matter more the effect of accident than scientific attainment, considered in the expanded view of the good of society the result of science. I wish to impress on men the systematic adoption of it, from the science or knowledge of the law of morals, and as the true and real object of man in the working of good through the law of his moral nature directing him.

Such is the grand result and expanded view of the good of man proceeding from the science of the moral law in the moral nature of man directing him to good.

In a considerate view of property and the social state of man, it cannot in reason be imagined, that good to which man is directed applies to a partial body or class as the owners or possessors of property, but to all who compose the state, the whole of the members of the society; and for what other purpose or object it can be supposed that man enters into and conforms to the rules and laws required for society, it would be reasonably impossible to conceive.

It is on this broad and expanded view that we are to look to the wants and necessities of the human race being considered, and not merely the security or indulgencies of the few, in comparison with the mul-

titude, imagining the whole system of the society, and the compact is raised for the favoured few, and regardless of or very indifferent to the welfare and good of the multitude. The good is the good of the multitude that is of object or concern, and the few are regarded but as a means of affording or bringing to pass that good encouraged by the superior benefit in their good fortune as being the possessors of property, by that produce from it which is for the good of the whole, and no one in this can be supposed to be excluded or excepted, neither is there occasion or necessity that they should.

That men will not so consider the position of the good of the few, resulting in society, we may rely they will not, indeed cannot, when the mind is opened and expanded to the reasonable views and considerations of humanity, that the study of man and the laws and rules of his moral nature that govern and direct him lead to, when opened to him, or his mind is directed to the consideration.

But until the mind is opened by philosophy on the object and purpose of society and the laws directing man in his peculiar nature, men as owners or possessors of property view it only as made for and respected for them, and look not to the view of the consent of all the society, and the purpose of that consent. They are partial or one-sided in this view, and look only to the laws and regulations for the respect and security of property, and the good resulting to them, and that they may if they please dole out, but do not see the greater

object in which the consent of all the society is required for the good of the whole state and people. If they did, they must see their title exists but with the claims of society reserved in it, who give it or maintain its institution, and would learn and see the reason of respecting those claims for the good to be produced and dispensed to the society by the means of property, and which in their duty to do good they who are blessed as the possessors were bound to regard.

*Final view of
the good of
society in con-
formity with
the law of
God manifest-
ed in human
nature.*

It is thus only that peace and the good fellowship of mankind can be promoted, preserved, and maintained ; and to no other end or object do we see the purposes of society, or of man, or of property, or of governments and laws, but which for good we are directed to by the law of reason and humanity ; and it is manifest it is the design of the Great Author of all, more peculiarly in the moral nature of man, having blessed his creature with the powers in mind and reason to discern and practise good in conformity with that nature God hath wrought in man.

*Consideration
of the general
administration
to the right of
man to good
to the desti-
tute.*

The subject that remains is the consideration of the administering to the right of man to good among those who may be in want or destitute. The right of man to good in the direction he has by the law of his moral means in reason, and the duty man has by the same law directing to good to do what is so, can only be ful-

filled by those who, possessing the means, beyond their own wants and necessities, affording it to those who may be in want or destitute, their means failing of obtaining it through the ordinary sources of employ, labour, agriculture, arts, trades, or commerce. In large and extensive countries, having yet open and waste lands and wilderness, the intervention of the legislature, or governments, or the laws, may not be required to promote and render certain this good to those in want and destitute. People, perhaps, may here find their subsistence, and may be admitted to take where plenty and superabundance exist and are wasting. But we are considering cases that require order, and regulation, and systematic provision made for such exigency. In populous states the land wholly appropriated, and in densely peopled districts and cities, the intervention of government and laws to provide, render certain, and regulate the assistance required for such, will be a measure of need. Such authorities instituted for the better presiding over and promoting the general good, that of those in want and destitute, in reason can we only consider, as part of that general good of the state and society all governments have in their care and management.

As we have before alluded to, the subjects of this consideration will appear before both their fellow creatures who are in affluence and possess the means to spare, and the authorities of government, in all the wretchedness and misery their want and

destitution will occasion. They are nevertheless in their right to good entitled to the same respect and consideration as the most rich and wealthy, and their sufferings, in charity and good feeling, should make them the object of regard and of consideration, and kindness, and consolation to assuage their woes and misery, and render by relief as well as by kindness and respectfulness of mode in administering it to their good. They not forfeiting by their misconduct and evil practices the duty of their fellow men towards them for good, they in justice are not to be abused, slighted, wronged, or unkindly treated, or looked upon with scorn. One occasion of their want or destitution is, that for the establishment of property and the good resulting from it, they are precluded taking their good out of that they have relinquished their good in, but to take by the interventional means of property.

It is from being limited and restrained as to their own good in that of which property consists that they endure the privation and suffering they are exposed to, when employ and labour fail to supply them with the means of sustenance, or such as the face of nature affords. But in their acts of respect and consideration of the owner and proprietors in their property, they have a just demand of a return of the good, they have subscribed to in such respect or consideration, resulting from "property" from those whom their forbearance in the convention to constitute "property," is the means of the enjoyment and benefit arising from it to those who possess it.

Charity to be performed as a duty, and the good administered as a right, to those in want.

And the dispensation of charity to those in want and destitute by the laws, although it must be given according to rules and regulations, is to be given as the due of such, and free from offence

to person, or the feelings of the mind, or affecting their character; for it is in right to their good, that they are entitled to have it, and if the duty of their fellow men is not forfeited towards them it is criminally unjust, and uncharitable to charge evil to them because unable to assist themselves, or in any way to imply or infer it. The dispensation, it will be obvious should be by immediate relief where required; but by a return of labour or service where such can be arranged.

Those in want and destitute to be considered leniently with mercy and kindness.

Another circumstance requires our attention to those in want and destitution, that they are to be adjudged leniently and kindly, and with allowances made for their sufferings, in relation to their appearance, their behaviour, their roughness or boisterous manners and their actions; and I carry this allowance and lenient consideration to the extent of palliating what otherwise than for their necessities would be crimes, where no extenuating circumstances exist. And if those in want and destitution take in their distress and need that which is the property of another for the supply of such want, mercy should be extended to them both in construction of the act and in the not visiting it the same, with the case as where there is no want or

necessity, or justification, but are the vices of idleness and misconduct, which brings them to their destitution. It is in these discriminations wisdom is shewn in laws, and true humanity and commiseration by individuals.

This view is justified by all writers referring to first principles or rules to govern or direct the actions of men in a reasonable or moral view, and for the purpose of making laws, and the executing of such laws for the good of society. I will appeal to Grotius and Puffendorff, to Locke and to Blackstone in this view or construction of human actions, and to corroborate the deductions that the right of man to good entitles them to take it where it is to be found if necessity compels them.

Grotius appears to consider this position, Book II. ch. ii. sect. 6. He says, "Let us now examine, whether in what is properly ours, there may yet remain a right in common to others, which question may by some be thought strange, considering that property seems to swallow up all right, which was at first held in common. But it is not so; for our better understanding whereof, we must look back to the true meaning of those who first introduced particular dominion: which may be presumed to be such as did (as little as might be) recede from natural equity. For if even our written laws oblige us but to a *quatenus fieri potest*, to what in natural equity may be done (as appears by our frequent ap-

Reference to
authors in sup-
port of the
merciful con-
sideration of
those in want
and destitute.

peals from our statute, and common laws, unto our courts of chancery :) much more may our customs admit of such an exposition, which are not fitted to words and syllables. Hence then it follows, that in cases of extreme necessity that ancient right of using every particular man's goods, as if they remained yet in common, stands in force: for as in all human laws, so in this very law of dominion, cases of absolute necessity are generally excepted. Hence it is that in navigation, if the common stock of victuals be spent, what every particular man hath is held as common. So in the case of fire, if I cannot otherwise avoid it, I may pull down mine neighbour's house to preserve mine own: and on the seas, if my ship fall foul, or be intangled with another, I may cut their cables to free myself. All which are not introduced, but expounded by the civil law. But this (as Ulpian tells us) never holds, unless it be in cases of extreme and manifest necessity, where this case is added of blowing up another man's house to save mine own. For even among divines, it is a received opinion, that in a time of absolute necessity, if a man shall take away from another that, without which he that takes it cannot live, he doth not commit theft: not, as some think, because it is to be presumed, that the right owner by the rule of charity, is bound to give it to him that so wants it; but, that it may be presumed, that the reducing of things originally common into private dominion, was to be understood with some grains of allowance in such cases. For if they that

first divided such things, had been demanded, what they would to have been done in such a case, they would certainly have been of this mind."

Puffendorff, Book II. ch. vi. sect. 7, says, " If we look on other authors, we shall find them much divided about this difficult point. The fourth chapter of the fifth book of the Decretals, enjoining penance to thieves who steal out of necessity, is by the gloss expounded of little and indifferent necessity, not of such as is extreme and insupportable. Covarruvias delivers his opinion almost to the same purpose as Grotius. The reason (says he) why a man in extreme necessity may, without incurring the guilt of theft or rapine, forcibly take the goods of others for his present relief, is, because this condition renders all things common. For it is the ordinance and institution of nature itself, that inferior things should be designed and directed to serve the necessities of men. Wherefore the division of goods afterwards introduced into the world, doth not derogate from that precept of natural reason, which suggests that the extreme wants of mankind may be in any manner removed by the use of temporal possessions. Peresius, arguing on the same side, alleges, that in this case a man is compelled to the action by a force which he cannot resist; and then, that the owner's consent may be presumed on, because humanity obliges him to succour those who are in distress. Besides, he observes, that the necessitous person doth not properly take the goods which were another man's, but

which lay in common ; and yet that he is bound, when he hath obtained deliverance from his want, to make fair restitution. Anton. Matthæus is of opinion, that a distinction should be made between the crime and the punishment ; the crime of theft, he says, is not taken off even by extreme penury, but he would have the punishment either wholly remitted or considerably mitigated or abated. Now that the crime of theft is committed, even under these circumstances, he endeavours to prove from the definition of theft in the civil law, which he makes to reach this action. Theft, the Emperor Justinian tells us, is a fraudulent seizing on the goods of others, for the sake of making a gain of them. But we may fairly plead, (in opposition to Matthæus,) that neither of these imputations can fall on the fact which we defend. For how can this be termed a fraudulent seizing on another man's goods, when both the owner lay under an imperfect obligation* of giving the thing desired, and the other person had a right, by virtue of his present condition, to possess himself of it by the most convenient means he could ? Nor can he well be said to take a thing of another man's for the sake of making a gain of it, who designs it purely for the relief of his extreme distress, with full wishes and resolutions to restore or to repay it as soon as possible. That part of his argument is mere bravado, where he tells us that no violence can compel a wise man and a good man to defile

* By which is meant charity.

himself wilfully with any uncomely action ; and that in these cases every one should (as Tully advises) rather patiently endure his own inconvenience than trespass on the conveniences of others. Now besides that it is an easy matter to talk philosophically, whilst we do not ourselves feel the hardship any farther than in speculation ; the fact under debate can, according to our way of determining it, include no other turpitude or indecency than such as persons of breeding and quality are guilty of, when the severity of famine compels them to feed on the basest and most filthy meats. And then the rule about conveniences and inconveniences is beside the question, which only supposes some little matter to be taken from a wealthy person, who doth not feel the loss, to keep another from perishing by the extremities of hunger or of weather. The same author observes on the Lex Rhodia de jactu, that though for the public benefit, in a time of scarcity, every man is obliged to bring what corn he has by him into common market, yet people are not hereupon empowered to carry off what they please because they are in want, and others abound ; but the whole business is to be left to the care and to the directions of the magistrate. But must the poor therefore be content to starve, when the magistrates neglect to make due provision for their sustenance ?

“ As to what some urge, that there does not appear to be any dispensation of the law in this matter, ’tis an objection that may easily be spared.

For sufficient reasons have been given why we may well presume that the law which forbids theft is not to be extended to the present case."

To the above citations we may add from Locke, as applicable to the same point, in his discourse of Civil Government, Chapter V., "Of Property." He says, "Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us that men, being once born, have a right to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink, and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence."

Blackstone, treating of rights, alluding to those things or subjects which, as before observed, we consider only as the subject of his rights, but nevertheless the same in meaning with us as to what is good, namely, the life and limbs of a man, see Vol. I. 8d ed. p. 123. He says, "By the absolute rights of individuals we mean those which are so in their primary and strictest sense; such as would belong to their persons merely in a state of nature, and which every man is entitled to enjoy whether out of society or in it."

Then in continuation of the same subject, but at a subsequent part, (p. 131,) he says, speaking of the protection of those matters he calls his natural and inherent rights, "The law not only regards life and member, and protects every man in the enjoyment of them, but also furnishes him with every thing necessary for their support. For there is no man so indigent or wretched but he may *demand* a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life from

the more opulent part of the community, by means of the several statutes enacted for the relief of the poor, of which in their proper places." And afterwards he refers to the relief of the poor under the laws and statutes. But in his remarks on persons capable of committing crimes, shewing who are excusable and who are inexcusable, (Vol. IV. 3d edit. quarto, p. 27,) he observes, "A sixth species of defect of will is that arising from compulsion and inevitable necessity. These are a constraint upon the will, whereby a man is urged to do that which his judgment disapproves, and which it is to be presumed his will (if left to itself) would reject. As punishments are therefore only inflicted for the abuse of that free will which God has given to man, it is highly just and equitable that a man should be excused for those acts which are done through unavoidable force and compulsion." The argument therefore to be drawn by inference hence is, that the necessity by that author is an excusable ground for committing an act otherwise a matter of guilt or crime, and punishable by the law. And we collect that what he terms are the absolute rights of individuals, (in his meaning of rights,) as "life," for instance, the demand of supply for necessities is recognised, and if demand is recognised, the taking also must be intended under the necessity for it, or the demand has no meaning, if not to be of effect when that demanded as absolutely required, and such taking being committed of neces-

sity, or, the same thing, through unavoidable force and compulsion, punishment should in such case be excused.

This view of the urgency of necessity being a ground of excuse, is in accordance with other old authorities of jurists and writers upon law, and quotations or reliance upon what is termed the "law book," and we believe we may safely refer to Selden, Bracton, and Bacon, as all holding the same view.

We refer only to other and old authorities to shew the principle to be one recognised by serious and well intentioned writers and authorities of human judgment, the first of their time of day. But we do not in truth need such authority, standing upon principles of human action, founded and established by the truths and facts of science, and do not need their aid, since it is shewn that rights are existing on the authority of the law in the moral nature of man of reason directing him to his good, and the compact of society, and the institution of property is for that good ; and therefore where a case of absolute necessity requires that good to be taken, the necessity of life or existence depending on it, although opposed to the general law required for the maintenance of the great good of the institution of property, may found a case of exception, where the penalties of the general law may be excused, and mercy in right and justice be extended.

Caution in considering But let us consider the case. It may be very difficult to state the ne-

the infraction of the conventional law of property. Necessity that shall be considered palliative or in justification of the infraction of law in making free with or of the invasion of another's property. Numberless and infinite may be the cases wherein some version might be given as a colour for the step.

The danger to the state of society, and peace and good order, would be placed in jeopardy, could the act of taking that which is another's property be considered as a practicable principle or rule that good government and laws could reconcile ; and the consequence of the disturbance of society under such a recognition would be an evil, as affecting the whole social state of man, greater than the partial endurances required of individuals, but it offers the strongest ground why the subject of those in want and destitute are to be the especial care and charge of the government.

But while the measure cannot be admitted for wholesome government in the peace and order and regularity of human proceedings, and the welfare of the whole society, and therefore cannot be recognised for good, may it not be possible to found a rule by which the acts of men may be measured, falling within which, the acts of those in want and destitute shall be considered with lenity and mercy ?

The case will come under the position of that of casuists and jurists, termed immediate, urgent, or absolute necessity.

It is to be recollect that the founding or instituting property is on the *necessity* of the step, for

the good of society generally ; and that such justification of necessity, establishes that institution consisting of privilege over things in the owner, and in exclusion of others, but for which only as a measure of human institution is the virtue known of respect to it, and the crime of offence to it.

Property is the offspring of necessity, namely, for good ; and if such necessity is the cause of it, or the institution of property is founded in such necessity ; necessity, arising under starvation, may justify taking from that belonging to another when it offers the only means of preserving life, and we are so justified by our direction to good. And such may form an exception to the rule of respect of property.

If, therefore, a rule can be found marked by necessity for good, that coming within which, the acts of man, in offending against property can be defined, (so as not to admit of the justifying an indiscriminate or optional infraction of the institution,) by which they shall be excused or stand excused with safety to the general measure of the institution of property, such may safely be considered a rule or law without disturbance of the institution, further than in the infraction of it within such limit.

Therefore a rule for this should be of the plainest form of action, and simple, that is, unmixed with other aggressive acts or hurt, or mischief, or offence, or involving complex cases. Such we would define to be venial acts, from the necessity of the case, the necessity of which for practical good should mark

the limit. Those in utter want or destitution, therefore, simply taking that which was required for their immediate sustenance, might perhaps with safety be considered as cases coming within a rule where mercy might be extended. But violence, outrage, and wanton spoliation accompanying the act of supplying sustenance, would not be the plain and simple measure of supplying it, such would be an aggravation and another offence, and could not be considered as falling within the limit of venial acts committed on the impulse of necessity.

Acts of aggression from the vagrant, the idle, the lazy or dissolute, or the habitual depredator; or want or destitution brought on from these causes, or from the dissolute and depraved conduct, and vice of the persons suffering, could not be looked on as venial acts from want or destitution. Such characters of themselves would incur the visitation of the law, on their own misconduct where offending against the laws or the person or property of others.

It may be supposed that such views offer so much opportunity of evasion of the strict law of respect of property, that it would be next to sanctioning licence of the most dangerous nature, and could never be considered as a rule admissible for society: and that it would, as a consequence, be opening that latitude of consideration to crime, that its precise nature could not be defined. On the other hand, we deny this, because we do define or give a rule that shall mark the act, to which mercy may

be well extended ; and any other acts not coming within that rule will be, or ought to be, the subject of the laws that may be made or are in force against those who may be guilty of them, as crimes against property, which requires protection as a requisite institution for the good of society.

Such then might be admitted to form ground of mitigation in crime against property, and where mercy to the culprit or the criminal might be extended ; but of the cases that shall fall within the rule, or shall be considered allowable as venial, the law, and those who have the dispensation of the laws, must finally decide, for it is evident that *no*

act of invasion or infraction of the institution, by the taking and appropriating, by one individual, of that belonging to another, of the character of theft or robbery, fraud, or other dishonest

means, can be admissible for the peace or order of society or for good, without making the subject amenable to the judicature and laws of the state, and therefore the subject of their adjudication ; and the case for mercy, the subject of its discrimination and decision.

FINAL OBSERVATION.

Here I must end my work on the Moral Law directing man to good, the human good, hoping what I have done may assist to vindicate the moral

law from the errors, mistakes and ignorance human nature is the subject of, without science ; and that in the science of the subject as here endeavoured to be given, mankind may proceed and be governed by truth and more correct ideas ; and for such good as may be attainable by man in his moral means, some benefit may attend my labours ; which, I give as a very humble offering of my own, but yet hoping, such as it is, it may be useful, and acceptable.

THE END.

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